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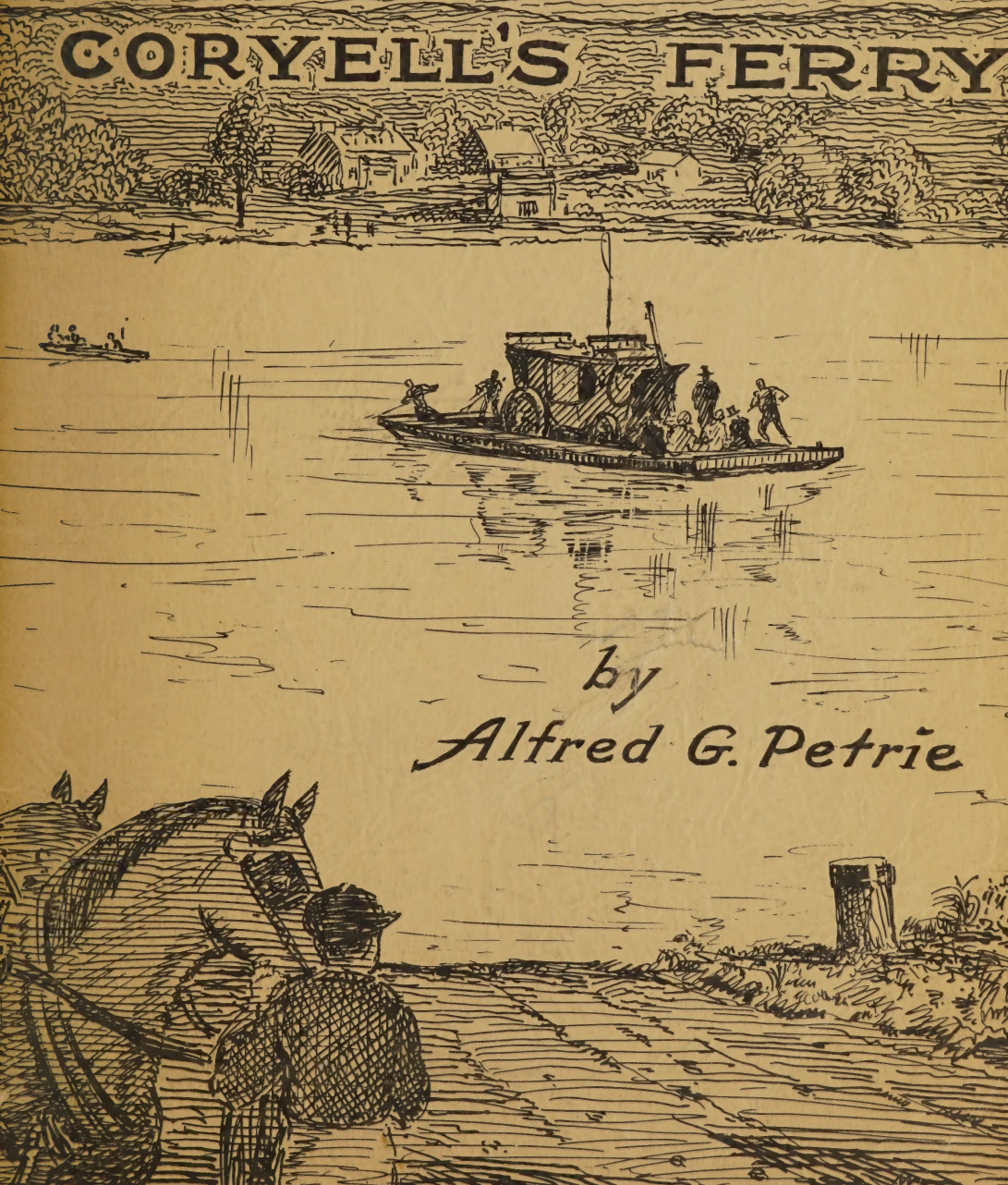
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# LAMBERTVILLE

NEW JERSEY

*from the beginning as*

## CORYELL'S FERRY



*by*  
**Alfred G. Petrie**

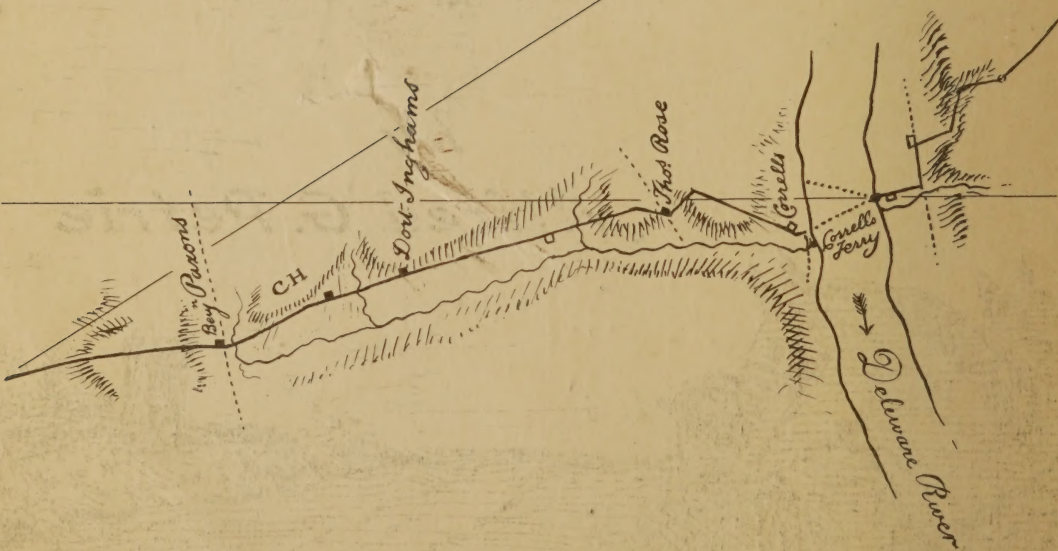


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*Lambertville,  
New Jersey*

FROM THE BEGINNING AS

CORYELLS FERRY

by

ALFRED G. PETRIE

1949

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## PREFACE

The manner in which the citizens of a community think is invariably reflected in the progress of their village, town, or city. If the people of a community have pride in its past, believe firmly in its present policies for good, and have confidence in its future, that community will surely move in the right direction.

Since the first of the above prerequisites, pride in its past, depends upon a knowledge of what has gone before, the writer has long felt that some work on the subject would be of interest and benefit to the people of Lambertville.

The early evolution of a town or city is intertwined with the development of its county, state, and, in this case, neighboring state. Since it is necessary, therefore, to set some limit it was decided to confine this research to the boundaries of the city, except in so far as to give a brief description of the position Lambertville occupied when "owned" by peoples in actual or theoretical possession of vast tracts of land.

The significant feature of this study, to me, has been the fact that whereas this country was originally granted or sold in large tracts to a few, yet in little over two hundred and fifty years, thousands of people have acquired their own small lots. This fact has been accomplished not by socialism or communism but under the democracy for which men like John Holcombe, Emanuel Coryell, John Lambert, and their descendants fought and helped establish.

Alfred G. Petrie D.D.S.

Lambertville, New Jersey

June 1, 1949





## CONTENTS

| Chapter                                   | Page |
|---|------|
| I THE ORIGINAL PEOPLE .....               | 1    |
| II THE NEW NETHERLANDS .....              | 3    |
| III THE ENGLISH TAKE OVER .....           | 5    |
| IV EARLY LAND TITLES .....                | 7    |
| V THE HOLCOMBES AND CORYELLS .....        | 13   |
| VI CORYELL'S FERRY IN THE REVOLUTION .... | 19   |
| VII COLONIAL ROADS AND HOMES .....        | 25   |
| VIII DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORTATION .....  | 31   |
| IX LAMBERTVILLE TO THE COLORS .....       | 43   |
| X PEACE, PROSPERITY AND EXPANSION .....   | 47   |
| XI THEN CAME THE WAR .....                | 50   |
| XII CAUSE AND EFFECT .....                | 52   |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....                    | 54   |
| REFERENCES .....                          | 56   |





## Chapter I

### THE ORIGINAL PEOPLE

The first white men to arrive in the area now called New Jersey, found the country populated by Redmen who called themselves the Lenni Lenapè. This name they apparently took from the beautiful river flowing through their territory which was known to them as the Lenapè Wihittuck, or Delaware. The nation itself later became known to the English as the Delawares. Their hunting grounds extended from the shores of Chesapeake Bay to slightly beyond the present northern boundary of New Jersey, and from the coast to the valley of the Susquehanna.

From their northern limits and on to the Canadian border dwelt their enemies the Mengwe, or as the French named them, the Iroquois. Both the Iroquois and Delaware nations were of the same Algonquin stock and spoke the basic Algonquin language, except that the dialect varied in different localities. Lenni Lenapè means "Original People" and the Delawares were exceedingly proud in their belief that other Indian nations had descended from them. There might have been some basis for it, too, as several of the neighboring tribes accorded them the title of "grandfather."

The nation of the Delawares was divided into three tribes. The Minsi ("people of the stony country") or Wolf tribe, being the most war like, occupied the northern reaches of the Delaware Valley in and around the Minisink plains above the Water Gap, and protected their territory from roving bands of Iroquois. The Unami ("people down the river") or Tortoise tribe and the Unalackto ("people who live near the ocean") or Turkey tribe roamed over the central and southern sections.<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered, however, that tribal boundaries within the same nation were never hard and fast nor easily defined.

Samuel Smith in his *History of New Jersey* written in 1765 describes the Delawares in this fashion: "Their houses or wigwams were sometimes together in towns, but mostly moveable, and occasionally fixed near a spring or other water, according to the conveniences for hunting, fishing, basket-making, or other business of that sort. Their homes were built with poles laid on forked sticks in the ground with bark, flags or bushes on top and sides, with an opening to the south, their fire in the middle. At night they slept on the ground with their feet toward the fire. Their clothing was a coarse blanket or skin thrown over the shoulder, which covered to the knee, and a piece of the same tied around their legs, with part of a deer skin sewed around their feet for shoes. In person they were upright and straight in their limbs. . . . the color of their skins a tawny reddish brown: hardy, poor, squalid. . . ."

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<sup>1</sup> It was the people of the Tortoise tribe therefore that occupied the Indian villages hereabouts.

Even before the settlement of the Dutch in New Amsterdam the Iroquois had somewhat reduced the more peaceful Delawares to a vassal nation. They called them women and forbade them to sell land, make treaties alone, or go on the war-path without the permission of the Six Nations. After the Iroquois obtained firearms from the Dutch, there was a rapid decline in the fortunes of the Delawares. By 1698 there were not more than two thousand in the entire state of Jersey.

The Rev. George S. Matt, D.D., writing in the First Century of Hunterdon County, gives an account of the villages located in this area: "One Indian village was located one and one half miles southwest from Ringoes along a creek on Jacob Thatcher's farm. Yet another was near Mt. Airy Station on the Alexsocken (the name of this was Nishalemensey).<sup>2</sup> There was quite a settlement of them near Rocktown." The Rocktown village was, according to old surveys, situated between Rocktown and the old York Road. Another settlement was situated near the Rock Methodist Episcopal Church, on the farm of the late John Wilson, (now owned by Rush), back along a swamp in the woods.

Plenty of evidence has been found that a village of some permanence existed in the area now known as Lambertville and for about a mile north of it.<sup>3</sup> Several Indian bodies have been unearthed above the present mouth of Alexauken Creek. There is every reason to believe that they camped here for long periods, especially during the heavy runs of fish which came up the river to spawn.

One of the Indians' main avenues of travel crossed the river at this point, and ran from Lambertville through Mt. Airy, Ringoes, Reaville and on to Newark, following the approximate course of the York Road. This Indian path, called the Naraticong Trail, connected the tribes living on the Neshaminy in Pennsylvania with the large encampments along the Raritan in New Jersey. This trail also connected at Ringoes with a great north south path that carried all the traffic in those directions. John Ringo, at an early date, established a tavern and trading post at this intersection which did a brisk business with the Indians.

By the time of the Revolution only a very small remnant of the Delawares were left in this region. Although they were treated well by the whites, many, having deeded away their lands to the settlers, preferred to move west to more plentiful hunting grounds. It may be noted that several served as scouts with General Washington's forces while they operated in the area of Coryell's Ferry. Graves of some who died while with the army are supposed to be located along with those of Continental soldiers at Bowman's Hill on the Pennsylvania side of the river.

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<sup>2</sup> A deed granted to Benjamin Field in 1702 shows one boundary of his grant rested on this Indian Village--in some deeds spelled Wishalmenty.

<sup>3</sup> Bulletin #18, Archaeology of Warren and Hunterdon Counties by Max Schrabisch.



## Chapter II

### THE NEW NETHERLANDS

In August 1609, Henry Hudson, sailing in his Half Moon, dropped anchor in Chesapeake Bay. From here he sailed to the Delaware Bay and after a short stay again weighed anchor and proceeded up the Jersey coast, arriving within Sandy Hook September 3rd, 1609. Sighting what he thought to be the mouth of a mighty river he entered it and proceeded to explore as far north as Albany. This river now bears his name. In consequence of this discovery, and the subsequent settlement at New Amsterdam, now New York, the Dutch claimed all the territory between Cape Cod and Virginia and called it the New Netherlands. What is now Lambertville naturally fell under this new title.

There seems to be no evidence that the Dutch ever bartered with the Delawares of this immediate section for tracts of land in and around this town. They did, however, establish a settlement in 1652 at Esopus, about two miles west of New Amsterdam, and from here proceeded to prospect down the Delaware Valley in search of copper ore. The writer, as a boy in scout camp, at Pahaquarry, remembers exploring the old drillings in that section and also the long hikes over the Old Mine Road which the Dutch cut through the woods from Esopus to Port Jervis, thence down the river to Pahaquarry. A. Van Doren Honeyman in his History of Northwestern New Jersey states that this hundred miles of road "was the longest stretch of good road for many years in America, and as late as 1800 was the preferred route for travel between New England and the south and west."<sup>4</sup>

To the best knowledge of the writer the farthest south they penetrated in quest of copper was Bowman's Hill on the Pennsylvania side of the river below New Hope. Here, if one follows Pidcock's Creek for about one half mile from the highway westward through the woods, the mine will be found. The opening will be discovered at the base of a small hill and even in the early twenties the mouth had so filled up with vegetation that it was necessary for us boys to crawl in on our stomachs. After clearing the entrance and lighting a candle it was possible, by crouching, to walk back into the hill about two hundred feet. At this point a perpendicular shaft had been drilled, which at that time had filled with water. There is reason to doubt that the entire mine was worked by the Dutch, since they were not known to drill perpendicular shafts; however, the manner in

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<sup>4</sup> John Adams, on his way from Boston to Congress sitting in Philadelphia, traveled over this route from the Hudson to the Delaware.

which the entrance was worked (no drill or powder markings) compares with the mining at Pahaquarry. The ore, having been mined, was carried up the river trails and over the Old Mine Road on the backs of Indian ponies, to Esopus. From here it was shipped back to Holland for refining. Records show that specimens of copper from these workings were displayed in Amsterdam, Holland in 1659.

It is apparent upon examining the strata in these mines that the copper content is very low, which fact, along with the tremendous labor involved in transporting the ore, led the Dutch to abandon the workings even before the arrival of the English in 1664.



## Chapter III

### THE ENGLISH TAKE OVER

Not for long could the English witness the vast stores of furs and minerals which the Dutch were shipping home to Holland. King Charles II, putting on his thinking cap, remembered that Cabot's discovery preceded that of Hudson's and forthwith claimed the New Netherland as part of Virginia. To back this up an English squadron was dispatched to New Amsterdam, arriving on August 29, 1664. Peter Stuyvesant, the governor, could do nothing but surrender his country on September the 8th.

Even before Charles had a report of the outcome of this affair he had given the territory to his brother, the Duke of York. The Duke in turn granted to two of his friends, Sir George Carteret and Lord John Berkeley, that section of the New Netherlands to be known as New Jersey. This name was decided upon because Sir George had at one time held the Isle of Jersey for the Crown, during the Civil War.

These two gentlemen established Elizabethtown (Elizabeth, New Jersey) as their seat of government and sent Sir George's brother, Philip Carteret, over as governor in 1665.

The Dutch in 1672 again went to war with England and succeeded in retaking the New Netherlands in 1673. However, at a treaty of peace in London in 1674 they forever relinquished their rights to the British.

The Duke of York, in order to more definitely establish his title, issued a new patent in 1674 to Carteret and Berkeley, and Philip returned as governor. About a year later Berkeley, for the sum of one thousand pounds, sold his interest to John Fenwicke in trust for Edward Byllings and these gentlemen entered into an agreement with Carteret to divide Jersey into two parts. The line ran "from the east side of Little Egg Harbor straight north through the country to the utmost branches of the Delaware River."

Carteret received the land east of the line, known as New East Jersey and Byllings was granted the territory west, known as New West Jersey.

This section now known as Lambertville, as part of New West Jersey, continued to be held by Byllings under a proprietary government as before. This meant that the proprietors had title to the soil and the right of government in so far as these rights did not infringe upon the Crown, or their laws differ from the laws of England.

After holding it but one year, Byllings in 1676, becoming financially embarrassed, disposed of his grant to a group of Quakers and two companies were formed, one in Yorkshire and one in London. The primary purpose of these companies was to colonize, and several hundred English men and women came over the following year.

This exodus from England on the part of the Quakers was accelerated by their persecution in that country.

Many boat loads of these people came directly from England up the Delaware to Burlington, which became the seat of government for the Province of New West Jersey. The land office was located here and all deeds recorded in that office. It may be noted that Perth Amboy was the town chosen in New East Jersey as its capitol.

James P. Snell, writing in his History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, tells us that "in the years 1701 and 1702 there occurred many dissensions and disturbances in both the East and West Provinces, and the proprietors, finally wearied of contending with one another, and with the people, drew up an instrument whereby they surrendered their right of government to the Crown, which was accepted by Queen Ann April 17, 1702. This was the end of proprietary government in New Jersey; thenceforth, until 1776, it was under Royal rule."

The Queen consolidated the two portions of Jersey into one province and sent out from England Lord Cornbury as governor of both New York and New Jersey. She did, however, give the proprietors continued rights of title to the soil, allowing them to dispose of tracts as they saw fit. Successive governors continued to sit over the two states until 1738, when a separation was effected. The last royal governor of New Jersey was William Franklin, son of Benjamin Franklin, who took office in 1763. In 1776 he was deposed by the patriots, arrested and sent to Connecticut as a prisoner.

## Chapter IV

### EARLY LAND TITLES

The proprietors of both Provinces recognized from the first that if peace was to be maintained with the Lenapè Indians it would be necessary, when obtaining land, to do so in what seemed a fair and honest manner. This practice was strictly adhered to until the last settlement was made on October 26, 1758 with Teedyuscung, a Delaware Sachem, who still claimed ownership of a large tract between Ringoes and Copper Hill.<sup>5</sup>

Many of the Delawares moved from Jersey to the Forks of the Delaware (Easton area) before 1730. When this region was sold to the English, the Six Nations allotted them land in the Wyoming Valley in Pennsylvania. The last survivors of the Delawares finally settled on a reservation at Fox River, Wisconsin, and from there in 1832 they petitioned the Legislature of Jersey to grant them \$2000 for which they would relinquish their hunting and fishing rights, which they claimed they had not sold with the land. The Legislature, with little debate, complied with this request: putting the state on record as being one of the few, if not the only one, to pay in full for everything they obtained from the Original People.

While title to the lands of both Provinces was derived from the Crown, the deeds either came from the Indian claimants directly to the individual, or from the Indians through the proprietors to the individual. The Council of Proprietors, sitting in Burlington, divided the Province of West Jersey into hundredths, and began to grant the land in this proportion to the early settlers. The first and second divisions of land by them extended as far north as Trenton, or Assanpink, as the Indians called that town.

In 1703 the people of the state felt that a third division, or taking up of land, was in order and petitioned the proprietors to negotiate with the Delawares north of Trenton with this in view. Accordingly, William Biddle, Jr., John Mills, and John Reading were commissioned to meet with the Indians and report back to the Council. The report was duly made on June 27, 1703, "that they had made a full agreement with Himhammoe for one tract of land adjoining the dividing line (the line between East and West Jersey) and lying on both sides of the Raritan River . . . and also with Copponnockous for another tract of land lying between the purchase made by Adlord

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<sup>5</sup>Teedyuscung, i.e., One Who Makes the Earth Tremble, claimed to have been born near Trenton. He spoke for the Delawares, and was a terror to the English in Pennsylvania during the French and Indian Wars. Finally the Six Nations executed him in 1763 by burning his cabin while he, drunk, was lying inside.



Boude,<sup>6</sup> and the boundaries of the land belonging to Himhammoe fronting on the Delaware." The area covered in these two tracts was about 150,000 acres and the purchase price agreed upon was seven hundred pounds. As can be seen by the above description, Lambertville was included in the hunting grounds of Chief Copponnockous, although the two tracts combined included practically all of Hunterdon County.

At a later meeting of the Council on November 2, 1703 the committee of three was asked to contact again Chief Copponnockous and have him, "mark forth and then to sign a deed for the land, and that they go to Himhammoe's wigwam in order to treat with him and to see the bounds of the land lately purchased of him."

It wasn't until the meeting of the Council of Proprietors in June of 1703 that the ground which comprises Lambertville was divided among several of the men present. (See map No. 1 center spread) John Calow's earlier purchase was recognized just north of the town on both sides of Alexauken Brook<sup>7</sup> and partly within the present limits of the city.

Richard Thatcher's grant came next with his southern boundary, a line running through the town a little above what is now Perry Street and not quite parallel to it.

John Reading, who had been one of the committee which negotiated with Copponnockous, received a warrant for ground next to Thatcher's. This extended south to a line which ran from the river due east through the present site of the Presbyterian Church, then diagonally across Church Street and on up over the hill to the region of Mt. Airy.

The next tract seems to have been in possession of Samuel Coate as early as 1702 as he, and later his son John operated a ferry by that name. At the time of the division it was in possession of Samuel. In cases like this the Council very often declared the lands forfeit and resold them to the same people or, in some instances to others. In this particular case Coate's ownership was acknowledged. Later John Coate deeded the land and ferry rights to John Percel on October 15, 1728.

For example, a close examination of the original parchment deed of John Holcombe's, dated November 16, 1705, shows that Byllings transferred the Thatcher tract of 250 acres in the following manner: Byllings, February 28, 1676 to William Peachy of

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<sup>6</sup>The Boude tract extended south from Lambertville and was purchased directly by him from Byllings prior to 1700. One of the first white men to take up land in this vicinity was Benjamin Field, who in 1701 had 2000 acres conveyed to him which was part of the Adlord Boude purchase and ran southward of this city and then eastward. Again in 1702 he received 3000 acres lying in the area of Rocktown and including ground as far as Ringoes. One corner of this grant is known to have been anchored on the old Indian village of Nishalemensey.

<sup>7</sup>Known at that time as Aliahhocking Creek.

London; March 4, 1676 Peachy to William Kent, geesemonger, of London; January 27, 1678 Kent to Gilbert Wheeler of London; May 9, 1702 Wheeler to Richard Thatcher of Bucks County; thence Thatcher to Richard Wilson on July 10, 1704, also of Bucks County, and finally to John Holcombe. In like manner the Reading tract of 100 acres was sold by Byllings in 1681 to William Welsh of London whose daughter in turn sold it in 1700 to John Reading of Gloucester, New Jersey; thence in 1701 to John Bull, Bucks County; to Wilson, to Holcombe.

Thus we see that while land in this vicinity was being transferred among friends in London and people in the colonies, before the division by the proprietors in June 1703, it remained for the proprietors to recognize these transfers or declare them illegal and resell them. Usually, if a direct deed from Byllings could be shown, they were recognized.

Neil Grant's holdings included the southern end of Lambertville and extended from the river up over Cottage and Goat Hills. It, too, was probably acknowledged or resold to him by the Council, since he seems to have had possession of it as early as his neighbor, Coates.

At the same meeting in Burlington, John Clark was given ground southeast of Goat Hill and Robert Dimsdale a number of acres, which included Mt. Airy. This seems to have concluded the third division of land by the proprietors, except that in 1705 William Biddle of Burlington County bought a tract just north of John Calow's from John Reading, which was acknowledged. All these tracts, and their relationship to each other, will be seen by referring to map No. 1 on Center Spread.

Except for Coates, and possibly Grant, none of these landholders seems to have settled here but rather they bought their tracts as an investment. For example, John Reading, almost immediately, in 1701, divided his property in two, deeding the northern portion to Richard Bull and the southern part of James Paget in 1704.

Bull was a celebrated surveyor of that day and personally laid out his southern boundary which still is mentioned in deeds as the "Old Bull Line." It ran from a point on the river<sup>8</sup> eastward on a diagonal between what is now Delevan and Jefferson Streets, and on up over the hill to a stone on the York Road at Holcombe's Grove, Mt. Airy. The writer believes that this is the only line surveyed in those times, of which remnants still exist. All these boundary lines ran parallel to each other but on a diagonal to the present city street and lot boundaries. Mr. Thomas Thorne pointed out to me that his northern log boundary, on the northeast corner of Delevan and Union Streets, can be seen as part of it, since his garage paving runs on a diagonal and his deed mentions the "Old Bull Line." Laying a ruler on a map of the city this line is again taken up by the southern fence of the Lambertville Tennis Club, which is situated on Main Street at the intersection of Jefferson.

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<sup>8</sup>Slightly north of the Diamond Silver buildings, across the canal from Delevan Street.



In 1704 Richard Wilson of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, apparently a speculator in land, purchased both Wheeler's and Bull's tracts of 350 acres and on November 16, 1705 resold them to one John Holcombe, a Quaker, of Abington, Pennsylvania. The purchase was made in this way--first Holcombe leased the tract of land for the sum of 5 shillings, and for a release paid 100 "of current silver money."<sup>9</sup> Subsequently on May 29, 1733 he purchased from John Wey the tract originally granted to John Calow. Later, on September 18, 1734, by acquiring William Biddle's tract Holcombe increased his holdings to where he possessed all of what is now Lambertville north of the Old Bull Line which included 1,832 acres.

With the arrival in 1732 of John Emanuel Coryell, usually known as Emanuel Coryell, from the vicinity of Dunellen, New Jersey, there were further consolidations of holdings. Coryell's first purchase was the ferry on February 8, 1732. He bought it from John Purcel who had bought it in 1728 from John,<sup>10</sup> son of Samuel Coates. Apparently a separate deed was made out for the farm or plantation. Mrs. Edward Closson has in her possession the original deed for the plantation which included 1000 acres, and for which Coryell paid Purcel 320 pounds "lawful money of the Provinces." His patent for the exclusive right to the ferry was granted on January 7, 1733. For the next eighty years this community was known in the colonies as Coryell's Ferry and was to play a very important part in the coming Revolution. From the heirs of Neil Grant, Coryell acquired their holdings in 1737 and followed in 1743 with the purchase of the Paget tract north of Church Street, thereby bringing his boundary to the Bull Line. His entire plantation now extended as far south as the Ege or Fireman farm: as far east as the Water Company property, and consisted of 1,503 acres. Thus it came to be that he, with John Holcombe, owned this region described in 1731 as a "wilderness still inhabited by a few Indians, wolves, foxes, panthers and fewer white men."

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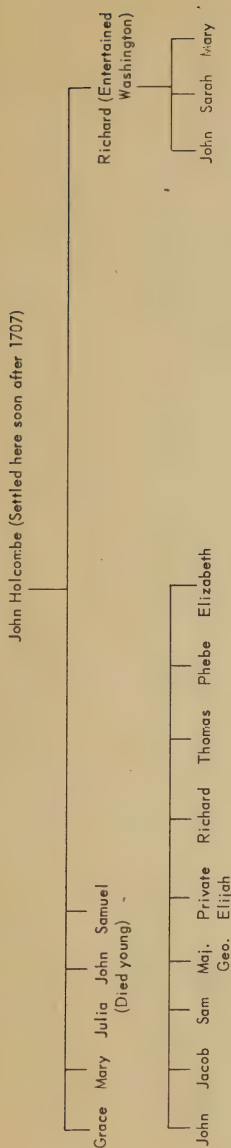
<sup>9</sup>Original deed for this parcel is in possession of Mrs. Edward Closson.

<sup>10</sup>John Coate had in 1723 inherited the ferry and ferry lot from his father and had been granted a patent to operate a ferry on April 30, 1726 by Governor Burnet. His father had apparently operated without a patent as no record of a license can be found.

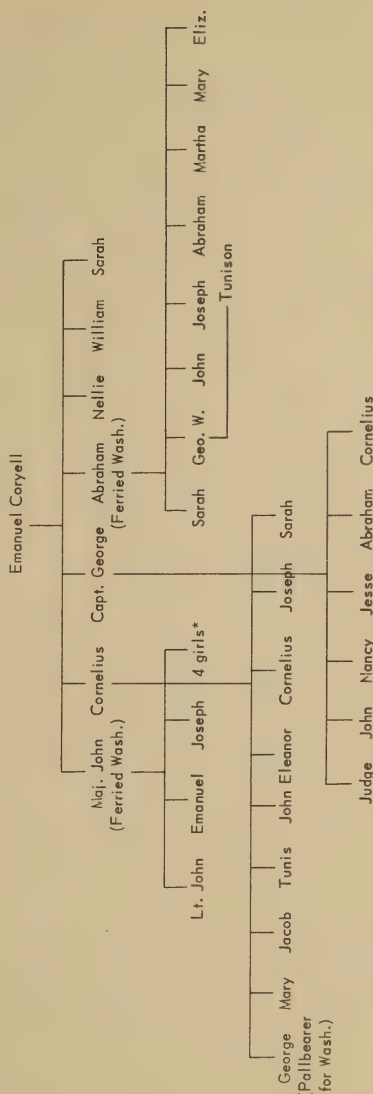


# PARTIAL GENEALOGY CHART

## HOLCOMBE FAMILY



## CORYELL FAMILY (Settled here in 1732)

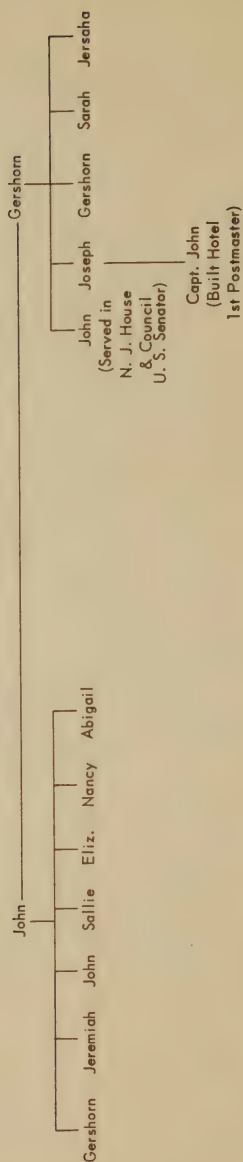


\*2 Amelieas  
Sarah and Elizabeth

(over)

# LAMBERT FAMILY

Brothers settled two miles north of Ferry between 1735-46



## Chapter V

### THE HOLCOMBES AND CORYELLS

Since Coryell's Ferry comprised two great plantations, it might be well at this point, to give a brief outline of the Holcombe and Coryell families which possessed them.

John Holcombe of Abington, Pennsylvania married a Quaker miss by the name of Elizabeth Woolrich on February 28, 1707,<sup>11</sup> two years after his first purchase in 1705. Just when they moved here is not known. No doubt he erected a simple log cabin for his bride before building the stone mansion known as "Washington's Headquarters" on north Main Street.<sup>12</sup> (No. 1 on map I)

"John's wife, Elizabeth (Woolrich)," writes an early Lambertville historian, Dr. P. A. Studdiford, "was an active and influential member of the Society of Friends. She was a preacher, and went over to Buckingham meeting every first and fourth day. On one of these occasions the river was very high and the ferryman begged her not to cross it as it would be most dangerous. 'The Lord will protect me,' said Mrs. Holcombe and went on. She reached the meeting safely and addressed those present. When the meeting was over, she was helped on her horse, a powerful stallion of the old hunting stock, and, as was customary in those days, was strapped to the saddle. As she started for home, the horse gave a powerful leap and sprang off on a full run. Several of the Friends who had horses, quickly mounted and pursued, fearing Mrs. Holcombe would be killed. They, however, could not overtake her, but when near the river shouted to the ferryman to 'Stop the horse.' This was of no avail, the horse plunging in the deep swift river. Mrs. Holcombe had the presence of mind to head him a little upstream, thus breaking the strong current. When they reached the other side of the river, the horse, merely shaking the icy water from his flanks, tore off again at the same wild speed, nor did he slacken his pace until he reached the stable door, having in his mad haste to get there, jumped a four-rail fence. This little escapade of Mrs. Holcombe's took place in December."

To John and Elizabeth Holcombe were born three daughters; Grace, Mary, and Julie, and three sons; John, Samuel, and Richard. John died when a young man, unmarried, so that from Samuel and Richard descended all the Holcombes in this area. Samuel is the great-great-great-great grandfather of the writer.

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<sup>11</sup>Recorded in the minutes of the Abington Friends Meeting.

<sup>12</sup>Indication that the house dates to at least 1724 was established by the finding, under the front door sill, of an English coin of that date, when the mansion was remodeled in 1946.



The old Holcombe homestead has long been considered the oldest house standing in this area, but the writer believes that either John Calow or John Wey (who later owned the tract) had built a stone house at an earlier date, now known as the Barber farm (No. 5 on map I). On the side of this building, next to the railroad spur which runs to Flemington, can be seen the date 1711. In John Holcombe's will he bequeathed to his son Richard, along with other property, this Barber homestead--"a farm in Amwell Township--the one he bought of John Wey."

Samuel married Eleanor Barker and took his bride to Mt. Airy. The store and dwelling (still standing) long occupied by him was a tavern during the Revolution. This marriage produced seven sons and two daughters. Two of the sons served in the army under Washington, Major George and Private Elijah.

When John Holcombe died in 1743, his will, witnessed by his neighbor, Emanuel Coryell, provided that the homestead go to Richard, who was in possession of it during the Revolution. As we shall see later, from a staff officer's diary, "he was a hearty old Quaker" and undoubtedly a shrewd one. Mrs. Edward Closson, a descendant of Richard, owns the house at the present time and has in her possession a photostatic copy<sup>13</sup> of the following bill presented to General Washington when he was quartered there in June, 1778.

June 21st and 22nd 1778

His Excell'cy General Washington to  
Richard Holcombe, Dr.

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| To 38 dinners @ 3/9                       | £ 7.2.6   |
| To Bread, Butter and other<br>necessaries | £ 1.17.6  |
| To Trouble, etc. made for the house       | £ 1.17.6  |
|   | £ 10.17.6 |

Near Coryell's Ferry  
June 22nd, 1778

Rec'd ye above account in full

Richard Holcombe.

Richard married twice, the first time to Mary Harvey who presented him a daughter. The second time he married Ann Emley who bore him a son, John, and a daughter. John continued to live in the homestead until his death in 1851. It was after his death that his heirs, in 1857, finally began to sell portions of this large estate, and streets above the Bull Line began to be opened up.

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<sup>13</sup>The original is in the Library of Congress.

Miss Hannah Anderson in her paper General Washington at Coryell's Ferry, states that there was a story told her by Mrs. Gervis Ely, a granddaughter of John's that he (John) took her by the hand when a little girl and said, "I want you always to remember that I told you that when I was a little boy I saw General Washington and General Green standing together talking under that walnut tree." The walnut tree referred to stood at the foot of the driveway to the homestead along Main Street, but is long since gone.

The graves of nearly all these Holcombes may be found in the graveyard of the 1st Presbyterian Church. The original John, however, was buried in the Friends Burying Ground, Buckingham, Pennsylvania, as he was a member of that Meeting.

The Coryell's, who were French Huguenots, came to the new world from that part of France bordering on Switzerland and settled near Dunellen, New Jersey. There appear to have been three brothers one of whom John Emanuel, or Emanuel, as he was known, came to this place in 1732 and made his first purchase of land. As has been mentioned before, he applied for, and was granted by King George II, a patent to operate a ferry on January 7, 1733. His patent reads, "We do . . . give and grant unto the said E. Coryell his heirs and assigns the sole Liberty and Privilege of keeping and using a Ferry or Ferries at a place called Coate's Ferry opposite Wells' Ferry<sup>14</sup> on the Pennsylvania side as aforesaid, thence three miles up and three miles down the said River Delaware."

The early ferry boat was the canoe, either that of the Indian or fashioned somewhat like it. By this the traveler, with his saddle bags, was conveyed across the stream while his beast swam behind.

With the opening of roads and the advent of wheeled vehicles came the ferry with its commodious "Flat." This was a long, narrow boat, with flat bottom and vertical sides. The bottom sloped upward at the ends, to the height of the sides, which were parallel and about a foot high. At each end was a flap, so hinged as to be turned in-board while crossing and outward at the landing, to make connection with the shore, forming a short bridge for the passage of teams.

The usual mode of propulsion was by means of setting poles. The operation of the ferries was often difficult and hazardous as floating ice and high water interfered seriously with the passage.

Miss Gallagher, in her Early History of Lambertville, informs us that Emanuel lived in a hut for awhile, but later in 1737 he erected a commodious stone tavern (No. 2 on map I) on the southwest corner of Union and Ferry Streets. Not only did he operate it as an Inn, but also lived in a section of it. The business appears to have prospered, for in 1749 he built an addition.

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<sup>14</sup>Patent granted to Wells on May 22, 1722. No records can be found of patents being granted for ferries above the Falls of the Delaware before this date. If wells did operate as early as 1719 it was without a patent.

This tavern became the social center of the community and played a large part in the entertainment of the officers and men of the Continental Army on numerous occasions when they crossed the river at this point. Washington, Green, Hamilton, Knox, Sterling, Monroe, and Paterson, all were guests at various times.

From Emanuel's marriage with Sarah Tunison, of Somerset County, came seven children; John, Cornelius, George, Abraham, Nellie, William, and Sarah. He did well with his ferry and plantation for, though he was not fifty years old when he died,<sup>15</sup> in 1748, he left his sons not only the ferry (situated on the most direct and shortest route between Philadelphia and New York), but also 1,503 acres of land, with 133 head of livestock and eight negro slaves. The vast estate was divided between four sons since Sarah was not of age, and Nellie and William had died early. Map No. 2 on page shows how the estate was divided.

John, the eldest, received the southern area, but very soon sold it. In 1765 he purchased the ferry on the Pennsylvania side from the heirs of Wells, so that at the time of the Revolution he and his brother transported all the troops in their crossings of the river. He must have also operated a tavern, as in 1774 records show he was granted a license to keep a "public house of entertainment" in Solebury, Pennsylvania. Both John and his son, John, Jr., held commissions in the Continental Army; the father as a Major, the son as a Lieutenant. His first son, Emanuel, held the rank of Forage Master in this area and writes of the times, "Detachments of the Army and brigades of wagons and supplies for the army were passing and repassing continually."<sup>16</sup>

John, operating the Pennsylvania side of the ferry, must have been the brother who received most of the orders from General Washington, since we find recorded a letter to the General written by him on May 10, 1784. No doubt, in listing the following services, he was either applying for a pension, or seeking to have some of the Continental money redeemed.

Having received orders November 25, 1777 from Colonel Mifflin to send to Trenton in order to bring up all the Continental boats etc. from there, and again in February 1778 rec'd fresh orders from him again to remove the Continental boats etc. to Easton in order to secure them from the enemy, also March 1, 1778 you also requested me to remove the boats, cannon and other matter from Bordentown up the river in order to secure them from the enemy--upon which I immediately collected a number of hands and executed your orders.<sup>17</sup>

Cornelius, the second son of Emanuel, who had built a home on Goat Hill, received that tract and during the Revolution acted as a

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<sup>15</sup>He was buried in the family graveyard, on which the Presbyterian Church stands. No stone marks the spot.

<sup>16</sup>, <sup>17</sup>H. Anderson in Washington at Coryell's Ferry.



guide for Washington, also keeping him informed as to the movements of the Tories on this side of the river. He died in his hundredth year in 1831. One of his sons, George, while learning the trade of carpentry in Monmouth County,<sup>18</sup> was present at the battle of Monmouth. Later, George, as a young man moved to Alexandria, Virginia, where he entered business. After the death of his wife he returned to Lambertville, where he died in 1850. While in Alexandria he became a Mason in Washington's home Lodge #22. Upon the death of Washington, six brother Masons were chosen to be pallbearers--one of them, a Lieutenant Moss, was taken ill so Mr. Coryell was selected to take his place.<sup>19</sup> Another son, Jacob, engaged in the tanning business at the foot of Goat Hill opposite the Towle Lace Works, using the water of the stream coming down off the mountain in which to soak the hides. His stone house was recently torn down to make way for the new highway.

George, the third son of Emanuel, inherited the northern portion of the plantation.<sup>20</sup> His home, until destroyed by fire around 1800, was located on the northwest corner of Main and York Streets (No. 3 on map I), where the Episcopal Church and Rectory now stand. He held the rank of Captain in the revolutionary army. The story is told of him that just before the battle of Trenton, when Washington had fortified the Pennsylvania side, Captain Coryell took a boat and came across to settle some business. While in his home he was taken by some advance scouts of the British Army, tied up and thrown into a boat which an officer used to row across and conduct a short reconnaissance of the Pennsylvania defenses. The Captain was recognized by his comrades, and they held their fire. Whether he was afterward exchanged, or paroled, is not recorded. Upon George's death in 1814 John, his son, fell heir to this section of town. John served as a Common Pleas Judge in Hunterdon County, and until his death in 1861 he lived in his mansion, now known as the Belmont Apartments, on Church Street, which he built in 1797.

The legacy of Abraham, Emanuel's fourth son, consisted of Lot #1 (the ferry lot) of 75-3/4 acres, and the franchises to the ferry. He must have continued to operate the ferry for some time,

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<sup>18</sup>He built a very elaborate fence and gateway for Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia.

<sup>19</sup>When Washington died he left his fishing kit to his personal physician, Dr. Craig. Craig, knowing of the close relationship which existed between Washington and George Coryell, bequeathed the kit to Coryell upon his (Dr. Craig's) death. The fish hooks, lines, etc. are now in the possession of a descendant, Mrs. Ashbel Byran.

<sup>20</sup>In an old paper pertaining to the distribution of the land among the sons in 1760 this lot is referred to as the Bungtown Lot. Where, or how, it derived this name is not known, but we do know that this rather uncomplimentary name has stuck with us too long. The writer has in his possession a cash book belonging to his great-grandfather who heads his first entry, "Bungtown, February 24, 1788."

along with his son George. Abraham, with his brother John might have died wealthy men had it not been that they were paid for conveying the troops back and forth across the river, in Continental money which was never redeemed by the government. As it was they were much impoverished. On Abraham's death in 1828, at ninety years of age, his son, George, must have continued in the ferry business as George's son, Tunison, remembered being born and raised in the Old Tavern. Tunison also remembered his grandfather, Abraham, showing him a trunk full of worthless Continental money, which had been paid to him for ferrying the troops.

## Chapter VI

### CORYELL'S FERRY IN THE REVOLUTION

After the fall of Forts Washington and Lee to the British in 1776 it was decided in November by a council of war, held by Washington, to give up the New York area and retreat across Jersey into Pennsylvania. In so doing he would place the Delaware between him and the enemy. These tactics were duly executed and on arriving in Trenton he immediately ferried his troops across the Delaware on the 8th of December. The last man of Washington's rear guard reached the Pennsylvania shore at midnight, just as the head of the pursuing Hessian column entered Trenton.

Washington's problem now was to prevent Cornwallis from crossing the stream and to secure enough boats for himself to recross quickly if a plan of attack could be devised.

To guard against the British from crossing he posted his men at every ferry and along the Pennsylvania shores from Coryell's Ferry to Bordentown. General Lord Sterling was stationed with his brigade in what is now New Hope, Pennsylvania. They threw up a strong redoubt (a sort of stockade entrenchment) on the top of the hill back of the old school house (lately converted into a private home). Another strong point was constructed in the vicinity of the intersection of Bridge and Ferry Streets, opposite the Presbyterian Church. To further fortify the crossing Washington ordered batteries placed on the banks of the river above the ferry.

All precautions taken to prevent a sudden attack, he moved to his next problem of securing more boats, in fact, all boats on the river. This task was assigned to Captain Daniel Bray<sup>21</sup> who later became a General in the New Jersey Militia. Bray, who was a native of Kingwood, was assisted by Captain Jacob Gearhart from Flemington and Captain Thomas Jones. These men knew the river well and collected every boat on the upper reaches of the Delaware and the Lehigh rivers, floating them down to Coryell's Ferry. Upon arrival here they were directed to hide them behind Malta Island on part of which is located the Union Mills on the Pennsylvania side.<sup>22</sup> The island, being heavily wooded at the time, hid them from prying eyes of Tories on this side of the river.

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<sup>21</sup>Bray's grave stone may be found in the Church graveyard, in Rosemont, suitably marked by the D.A.R. chapter of Trenton. A bronze marker points to it from the road. The marker indicates Bray was born October 12, 1751 and died December 5, 1819.

<sup>22</sup>This is no longer an island since at the time the canal was put through in the early 1800's the water was diverted to the east side and the west channel filled in with dirt.



Sixteen of these boats were Durham boats, so called because they were constructed to transport iron from the Durham furnaces down the river to Philadelphia. They were very large flat bottomed boats which were rounded at bow and stern like a canoe. They had a long steering oar at the helm. Along with four scows these, then, composed part of the "fleet" of thirty-five boats which on the memorable night of December 25, 1776 were taken down to McKonkey's Ferry (Washington Crossing) and transported the men across the river for their march on Trenton, and victory over the Hessians.

It is a matter of record that General Washington, who at the time made his headquarters at the William Keith house near Brownsburg<sup>23</sup>, crossed the river from this town, while the above preparations were being made. He was conducted to Goat Hill by Cornelius Coryell, son of Emanuel. Here he reconnoitered from "Washington's Rock" (known to all Lambertville boys) in order to see if the Jersey heights commanded his defenses in Pennsylvania, and if the boats hidden behind Malta could be seen. Apparently they were well concealed as Cornwallis had heard that boats were being collected at Coryell's Ferry and sent spies up the Jersey side. However, they saw nothing to substantiate the report. It was at this time that Washington wrote his brother-- "You can form no idea of the perplexity of my situation; no man, I believe, ever had a greater choice of difficulties and less means to extricate himself from them."

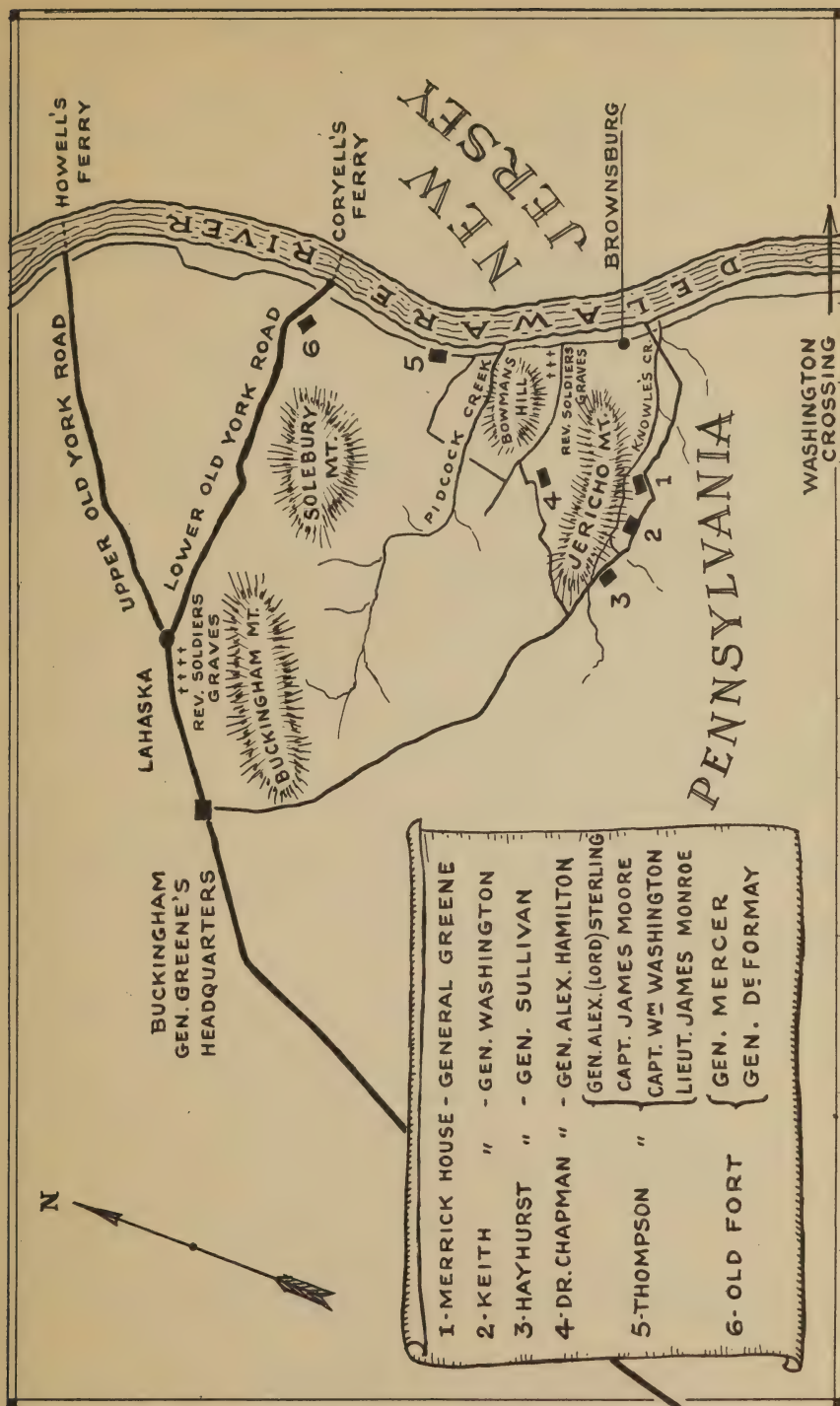
In sequence, thereafter, we have the battles of Trenton, Assanpink and Princeton after which Washington went into winter quarters at Morristown, New Jersey. The following spring of 1777 found him too well fortified on the heights of Middlebrook (Boundbrook, New Jersey) for the British to attack, and after a few feints on the part of both (and some minor action), the enemy withdrew to Staten Island and embarked (as Washington surmised) for Philadelphia.

General Washington put his army in motion and by easy marches proceeded across New Jersey, arriving for the second time at Coryell's Ferry on July 28, 1777. Apparently Alexander Hamilton was with him at this time as we find a letter written by him to Robert Morris dated July 29, 1777--Coryell's Ferry. Washington, with twenty-one of his staff officers, slept at Richard Holcombe's, since we find the following in the journal of Colonel Fickens. "We marched to the Ferry and quartered at a hearty old Quaker's named 'Oakham.'"<sup>24</sup> As further evidence of his visit there, the Library of Congress possesses the following receipt given the General by Richard.

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<sup>23</sup>A sketch of the location of the houses occupied by the officers appears on opposite page.

<sup>24</sup>A colonial mispronunciation of Holcombe.



|      |                                     |        |
|------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| 1777 | His Excellency Geo. Washington--Dr. |        |
| 29th |                                     |        |
| July | to 22 suppers @ 2/6                 | £ 2.15 |
|      | to 22 breakfasts @ 2/6              | £ 2.15 |
|      |                                     | £ 5.10 |

Rec'd ye above in full

Richard Holcombe

From the Ferry at the time Washington wrote the following letter to Congress sitting in Philadelphia.

Coryel's Ferry, Jersey, July 30, 1777

Sir,--I do myself the honour to inform you that I arrived here on the twenty-eighth, at night, with Gen. Green's division, one brigade of which passed the river that evening, that the whole might encamp the more commodiously. Gen. Stephen with his own and Lincoln's division, also arrived a little time after at Howell's Ferry<sup>25</sup>, four miles above us.

I have thought proper to hold the whole army at these two places and at Trenton till our knowledge of the enemy's destination becomes more certain. If the Delaware is their object, we are now within two days easy march of Philadelphia, and can be there in time, I trust, to make every necessary disposition for opposing them. On the other hand, if Gen. Howe by this expedition to sea, only means a deep feint, and should turn his attention again to the North River, we can from hence reinforce Gen. Putnam's army more expeditiously than if we were farther advanced.

The importance of my receiving the earliest intelligence of the fleet's arrival is apparent; and Congress, I am certain; will direct proper measures for obtaining it, and also for transmitting it to me in the most speedy manner. If authentic advice should be had of the fleet's coming into the Delaware at the same time that is communicated to me, it will be proper that an express should be sent to Lord Sterling or the commanding officer at Trenton, to advance with all troops from thence. Should this not be done, the marching of the troops will be considerably delayed.

I have the honor to be, with great respect,  
your most obedient servant.

G. Washington

The next day he wrote the following.

Coryel's, July 31, ten o'clock A.M.

Sir,--I am this moment honoured with yours of five o'clock this morning<sup>26</sup>, and have accordingly set the army in motion. One

<sup>25</sup>Howell's Ferry was at Stockton, New Jersey.

<sup>26</sup>Note that it took five hours by fast horse from Philadelphia to Coryell's Ferry.



division had crossed the Delaware the day before yesterday; and I am in hopes the whole of the troops now here will be able to reach Philadelphia tomorrow evening. Lord Sterling's division lies just in my rear and will move on with us. I propose setting off for your city as soon as I can get the chief part of the army over.

I am, with the greatest respect, Sir  
your most obedient servant.

G. Washington

Little did the troops realize on passing through this place that within a few weeks they would fight two battles resulting in their defeat, i.e., Brandywine and Germantown (October 4). As though defeat wasn't enough they were then required to undergo the rigors of winter quarters at Valley Forge.

Early in the year of 1778 the Marquis DeLafayette must have been here on his way to organize a force to invade Canada, which incidentally fell through. After having left Valley Forge he wrote Washington "according to Lord Sterling's advice I went to Coryel's Ferry, thence I proceeded to New York State."

The spring of 1778 brought word to Washington that the British had received orders to evacuate Philadelphia and proceed to New York. Instead of taking ship, General Clinton, now in command, elected to march his men across Jersey and crossed the river to Camden on the 18th of May.

Washington at once decided to bring the enemy to battle before they reached New York and accordingly put his army in motion via Coryell's Ferry, in order to intercept them. On this third stay at the Ferry he was lodged with Richard Holcombe at what is still known as Washington's Headquarters on North Main Street. Reference has already been made to the bill presented by him to Washington at this time. It was no doubt while here that he penned the following letter to Congress.

Headquarters Near Coryel's Ferry.  
June 22, 1778.

Sir,--I have the honor to inform you that I am now in Jersey, and that the troops are passing the river at Coryel's and are mostly over. The latest intelligence I have had respecting the enemy was yesterday, from Gen. Dickinson. He says that they were, in the morning, at Moorestown and Mount Holly, but that he had not been able to learn what route they would pursue from thence; nor was it easy to determine, as from their situation they might either proceed to South Amboy or by way of Brunswick. We have been a good deal impeded in our march by rainy weather. As soon as we have cleaned the arms and can get matters in train we propose moving toward Princeton, in order to avail ourselves of any favorable occasions that may present themselves of attacking or annoying the enemy.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, Sir  
your most obedient servant.

G. Washington

Miss Sarah Gallagher in her booklet *Early History of Lambertville, New Jersey* states that "from the lips of the son of Capt. George Coryell" she was told that the men were encamped after crossing, on June 22nd, in an orchard on the northeast corner of Bridge and Union Streets (site of A & P store). Furthermore, that some of the staff officers including Maj. Gen. Green and Maj. Anthony Wayne were quartered at his home, he being a boy of fourteen at the time. This would be the house which stood where the Episcopal Church now stands. (No. 3 on map I).

After a council of war lasting two hours, held by Washington under an old apple tree in the rear of his headquarters, the troops set forth toward Hopewell. The line of march was up Quarry Street to the first bridge across Swan Creek, across this bridge and then a left turn up the Old Saw Mill Road (Brunswick Ave.). On reaching the top of the hill the road then became known as the Farmers Highway or as we now term it, the Brunswick Pike. This road led directly to Hopewell where after a rest the troops continued on through Rocky Hill, Kingston, Cranbury, and into Monmouth where the battle was fought on June 28, 1778.

Following the battle of Monmouth the war was conducted in and around New York. Although Washington crossed New Jersey again with his army in 1781, on his way to Yorktown, he did this via Trenton rather than through Coryell's Ferry.

## Chapter VII

### COLONIAL ROADS AND HOMES

A glance at the Erskine map, on back of cover, will show that the York Road, which developed by the mere widening of the old Indian trail, came directly up from the ferry (which docked just north of the mouth of Swan Creek) and then, after passing the Tavern, continued on to Main Street. There it turned left and followed up Main to what is now York Street. Other writers have stated that the road cut diagonally across town from the corner of Union and Ferry to the corner of Franklin and York. However, Capt. Erskine, who was Washington's map maker, was very exacting and it may be noted from his map that he has drawn in the home of Capt. George Coryell which stood at the time on the corner of York and Main, and by which the road is shown to pass. The first recorded mention of this as a road is to be found in the will of Samuel Coates, dated 1723,<sup>27</sup> whereby he describes his land as being near the "Yoark Road." Elsewhere we find it described as the King's Road or The King's Highway.

Apparently by 1769 it was definitely known as the Old York Road since in advertising the establishment of a new stage route between New York and Philadelphia the owners stated it would proceed by way of "Coryell's Ferry, the only Ferry between Newark and Philadelphia noted for its Shortness and Conveniency over the River Delaware. This road is known by the name of the Old York Road through the finest, most pleasant and best inhabited part of New Jersey." The through fare from New York to Philadelphia was twenty shillings and the shortest time was one day and a half. More often it was a two day trip, with Coryell's Ferry the overnight stop. This stage, known as the Swift Sure Mail Stage, passed through the Ferry twice weekly and a Durham boat plied to and from Philadelphia once a month. Goods from both stage and boat were delivered about town in a wheelbarrow.

These stages were light wagons constructed high in the rear and low in front, chaise fashion; thus little or no weight was thrown upon the horses, allowing them to cover forty or fifty miles per day with ease. The passengers sat on hard wooden benches placed across the wagon.

As has been mentioned before, in describing Washington's route to Monmouth, the only other highways out of town were the one passing up Quarry Street thence across the creek to the Brunswick Pike. Another road, probably little more than a trail followed the present road north across Alexauken Creek then right up the "Middle Road," which finally winds down into Howell's

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<sup>27</sup>Sec. of State Archives, Trenton, New Jersey



Ferry (Stockton). The River Road south followed the present road bed as far as Fireman's Farm then bore to the left, away from the river, going over the hills rather than at the base of them.

Except for Ferry Street (which was really part of the York Road) no other street, as such, existed at the time of the Revolution. In fact there were only four houses which stood within the present limits of the city, i.e., Richard Holcombe's (No. 1 on map I); The Tavern (No. 2 on map I); Captain George Coryell's (No. 3 on map I) and the Tanner house (No. 4 on map I).

The Tanner house was situated on the south side of Coryell Street, near the river. Beside it, toward the river, stood a warehouse in which merchandise coming from up or down the river was stored. This was convenient to docks which were built at the foot of Coryell Street and into which, when the river was at flood stage, often came the ferry, since the mouth of Alexauken Creek formed a sort of protecting cove, or eddy.

The well supplying water to the Tanner house, and for many years the whole town, is still in use on the north side of Coryell Street, just west of the railroad tracks. (4A on map I).

Just to the north of the termination of Union Street, outside the present city limits, stands the before mentioned Barber home-stead, (No. 5 on map I) 1711, and still farther north the house owned at a later date by John C. Holcombe, a grandson of Samuel's. This latter house referred to is situated just north of Riverview Cemetery, on the right (No. 6 on map I). The middle stone section has the marking 1744 under the eaves--the western stone section (toward the road) being added later in 1811, probably by John C. Holcombe. The writer has had difficulty in establishing who built the 1744 portion, but we do know that the tract had been bought by the original John Holcombe about 1735.

The next building to appear in this community was the home of Judge John Coryell,<sup>28</sup> now known as the Belmont Apartments on Church Street. This he erected in 1797. (No. 8 on map 2). No doubt his father, Capt. George Coryell, came to live with him after his home on York Street burned, around 1800, as he was buried from this house in 1814. The property extended through to Coryell Street, and his brick barn still stands behind the apartments.

In 1802 the Judge opened up Coryell Street and began selling building lots, thus making it the oldest street in town; Ferry Street being known as part of the York Road. The oldest houses now standing on this street are as follows, more or less in the order of their erection--brick house second from the northwest corner of George and Coryell, followed by the brick dwelling directly across from it on the south side. The frame building on the north side next to the hardware store is also one of the earliest. In quick succession followed many of the dwellings on this street, especially those built of brick.

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<sup>28</sup>His obituary in the Beacon of November 15, 1861 states that "when he was married in 1796 the business of the town still consisted of the Tavern, river traffic and a blacksmith shop."

The year 1812 was a most significant one in the history of this community, since it marked the building of the river bridge and the consequent enlargement of the town. Bridge Street was laid out, and Capt. John Lambert built the Lambertville House (No. 11 on map 2) which resulted in the old Tavern closing its doors as an Inn.

Captain Lambert's uncle, the Hon. John Lambert, represented his fellow citizens both in the State Legislature and Council. Later he was elected to the U. S. House of Representatives, and during Jefferson's administration, to the Senate. It was while he was in the Senate, in 1814, that he procured the first post office<sup>29</sup> for this town, which he proceeded to call Lambert's Ville. His nephew, John, was designated postmaster. Now while the Lamberts had purchased ground north of John Holcombe's plantation as early as 1746, they were looked upon by the Holcombes and Coryells as "newcomers," so the new name was thoroughly resented. The good Judge, therefore, with the consent of John Holcombe, dubbed the area north of his line on Church Street as "Georgetown," in honor of his father, Capt. George Coryell. This confused state of affairs persisted for a number of years until the town was finally incorporated as a borough on March 1, 1849, at which time the "s" was dropped and it was known as Lambertville.

Judge Coryell also sold a large tract of land, about 1812, to Dr. John Lilly who built a mansion upon it. This building on Bridge Street is now known as the Moose Home. Bridge Street began to come into its own with the erection of the Marshall house in 1816; the house now occupied by the Catholic priests, built in 1827, and the house next to the Baptist rectory, in 1830. The late Dr. Samuel Lilly is authority for the statement that at that date there were "exactly one hundred buildings, large and small, in the community."

Of the above mentioned homes probably the most interesting, historically, is that built by Philip Marshall. (No. 10 on map 2). It stands on the north side of Bridge Street next to St. John's School. It is now owned by the parish, and is occupied by the Sisters of Mercy.

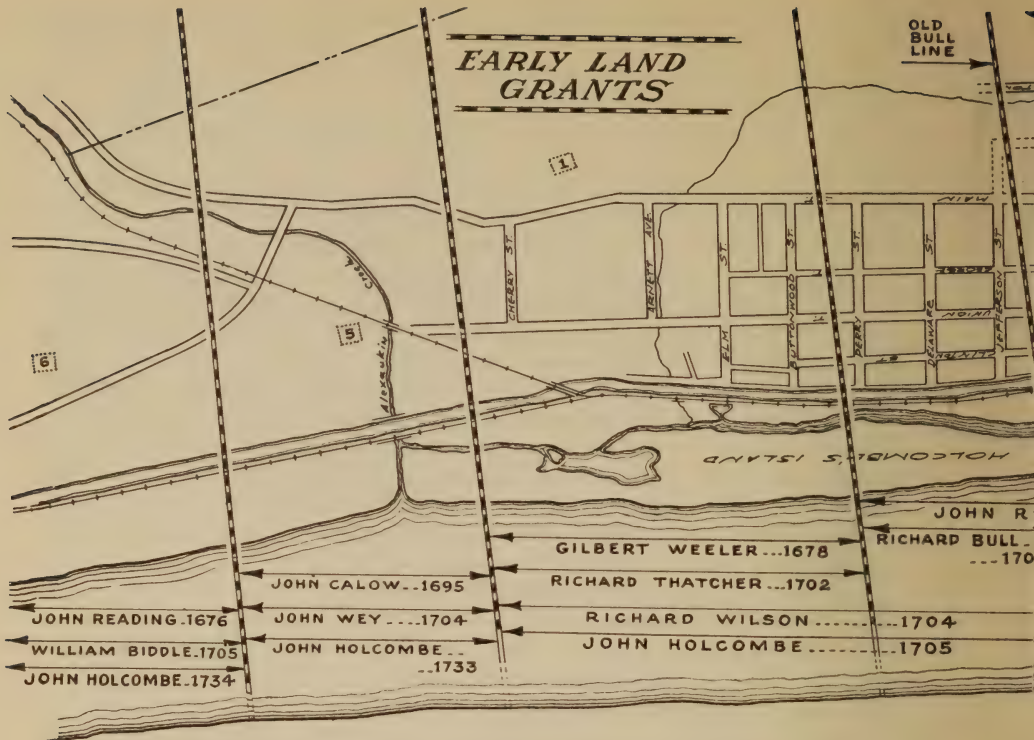
It was in this house that Philip's son, James Wilson Marshall, lived until 1834 when he was twenty-four years of age. In the fall of that year he went west, stopping for a time in Indiana, Illinois, and Kansas. Joining a train of a hundred wagons at the latter place on May 1, 1844, he reached California in June, 1845, and proceeded to Sutter's Fort in El Dorado County, where he obtained work from General Sutter. In 1846 he volunteered for service and fought in every engagement of the Bear Flag War. On the termination of hostilities in March, 1847 he returned to Coloma, in El Dorado County, and built a saw mill in partnership with General Sutter, who furnished the capital. It was on January 18, 1848, in the race of this mill, that he discovered gold, which brought on the famous

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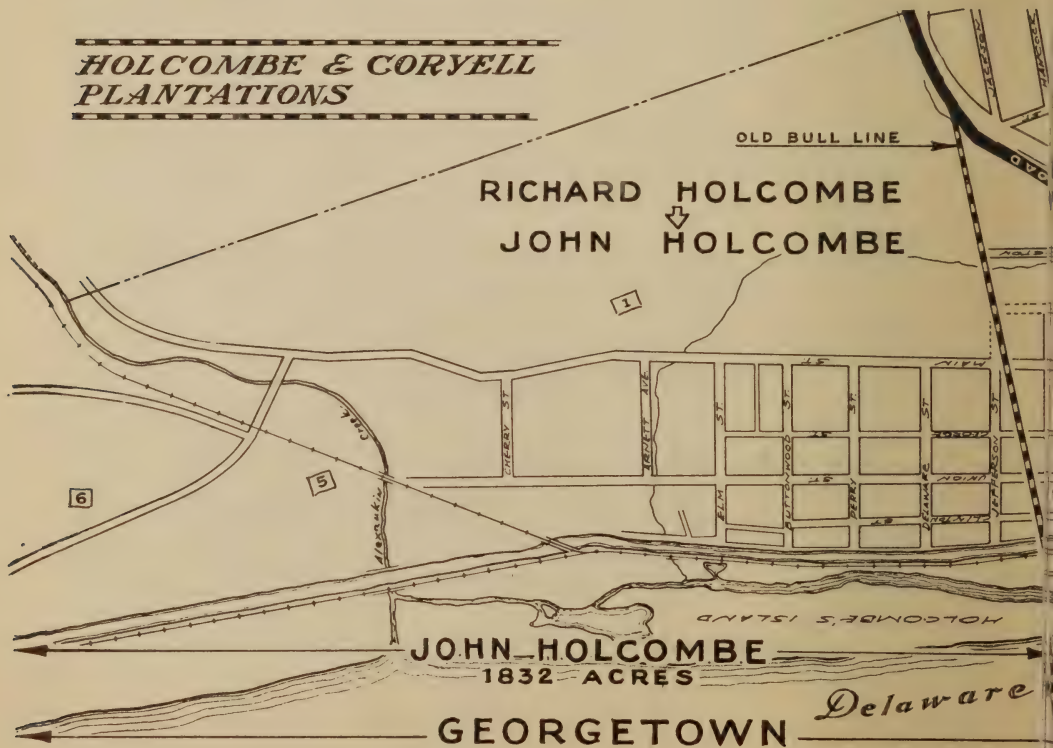
<sup>29</sup>Situated on Bridge Street; first in the Hotel, later next to the Chocolate Shop.



## EARLY LAND GRANTS



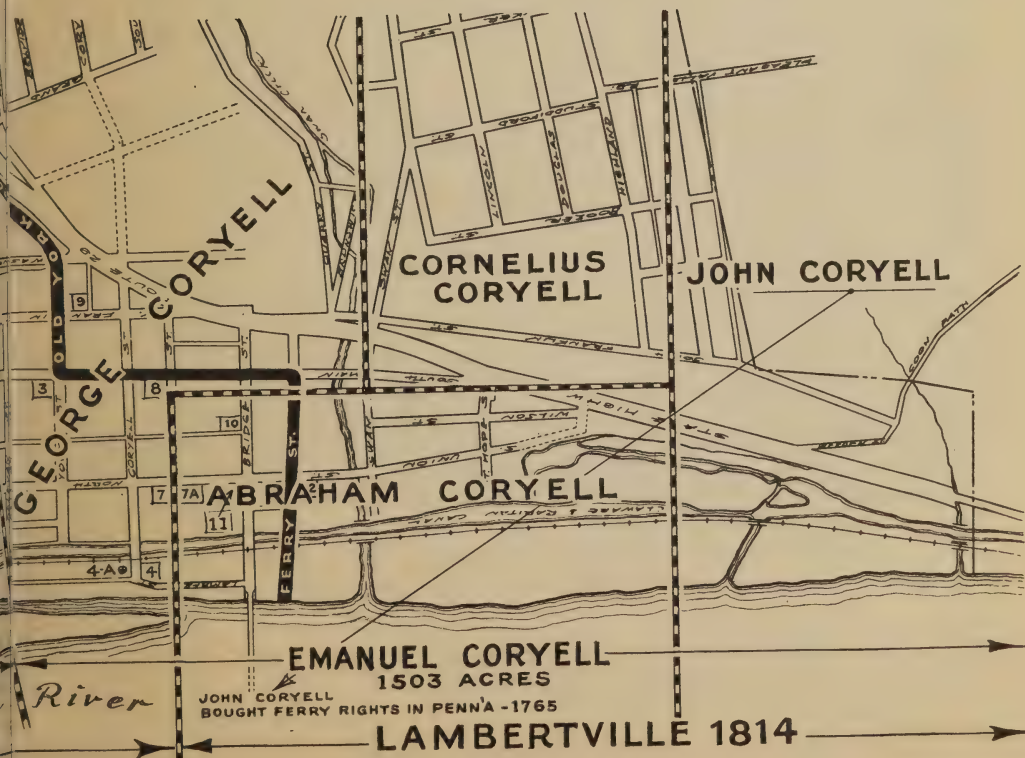
## HOLCOMBE & CORVELL PLANTATIONS



GEORGETOWN

Delaware





gold rush of '49. Although at one time worth over \$100,000, due to poor investments and a generous nature, he died penniless at seventy-four years of age, in a county hospital. The state of California has erected a statue to his memory at Coloma.

With much fanfare the Georgetown and Franklin turnpike (Brunswick Pike) was incorporated and opened on February 25, 1816. This was merely an improvement to the old road between Georgetown (Lambertville) and New Brunswick, and for the use of which the incorporators charged toll. It, however, proved a poor investment, and became a public highway in September of 1841.

Up to 1817 the tract upon which the Presbyterian Church now stands had been part of the Coryell plantation and used as a burying ground for the Coryells and their neighbors (7A on map 2). The first Coryell, Emanuel, was interred here and later his sons and grandsons. John Holcombe's sons and grandsons also found rest within its confines. Even the Lamberts were not excluded, despite the fuss over the name of the community.

In the above mentioned year a few citizens, feeling the need for a church within the town, arranged with Judge John Coryell and Capt. John Lambert to buy enough property each side of the line on Union Street on which to erect an edifice. This transaction was completed for the sum of one dollar, and on the 18th of August, 1817 the corner stone was laid. The name adopted was the Union Presbyterian Church, signifying a union between Georgetown and Lambertville (No. 7 on map 2). Records state that the large timbers for it were turned in the orchard across the street; this being part of the same orchard in which Washington had camped his army. The bricks for the building were burned on south Main Street, just north of the First Ward School house.

It was soon after this that Union Street was opened up to Coryell. The cross streets seem to have been laid out first, as we find houses being built on York Street in 1826, and on Delevan Street in 1832. As long as ten years later Union Street was a mere alley above Coryell, but in 1842 it too was made of uniform width all the way north to Delevan.<sup>30</sup>

Apparently Franklin Street south of York occupied an important place in the community at an early date, as some very old houses may be seen standing today. On the east side of the street, between York and Coryell Streets, stands the city's first public school. (No. 9 on map 2). Erected in 1843, it is a two story brick building set slightly back from the street. The old well and pump which served the early pupils can still be seen in the front yard. It is in use today, and has never been known to go dry. In 1853, when the present High School was built on Coryell's Hill (High School Hill), this old school house was sold and converted into two private dwellings.

During the autumn of 1857 the heirs of John Holcombe began to sell tracts of land north of Delevan Street, and as houses began

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<sup>30</sup>Photograph of map on opposite page shows town as it existed in 1851. Made by Samuel C. Coryell.



Town in 1851 by Samuel C. Coryell



to be erected more streets were laid out. Before Jefferson Street was formally widened it was known as Washington's Lane and so appears in the writer's search of his property.

## Chapter VIII

### DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Shortly after the close of the Revolution, when business had settled down, the need for better transportation of commodities for a fast going country became apparent. Up to this period the heaviest populated settlements had been along natural waterways, which served as avenues of travel.

The principal type of craft used on the Delaware up to the opening of the canals was the Durham boat mentioned before in Washington's request for transportation of his troops during the war. A description of this unusual craft is found in a paper of J. A. Anderson's.<sup>31</sup> He in turn had received it from one Wilson Lugar of Lumberville, Pennsylvania, the last man to make a trip to Philadelphia in a Durham boat in 1865, with a load of shuttle blocks. His description follows:

It is frequently stated that the Durham boat was modelled after the Indian canoe. Both were pointed at both ends, but, in other respects, there were marked differences. In fact the name 'canoe' has been applied to a variety of dissimilar craft.

In section the sides of the Durham boat were vertical, for the most part, with slight curvature to meet a like curvature of a part of the bottom, which, for the most of its width, was flat.

Lengthwise, the sides were straight and parallel until they began to curve to the stem and stern posts, at some twelve or fourteen feet from the ends, where the decks, fore and aft, began, the rest of the boat being open.

The partly rounded form of the hull was preserved at the ends, instead of being hollowed, as was usual in the Indian canoe. Perhaps the craft most like the Durham boat, in general shape, would have been the "dug-out," a log hollowed out and pointed at both ends, with the bottom and sides slightly flattened.

The ordinary length was sixty feet, although shorter boats were built, and, in some instances, the length was extended to even sixty-six feet, with sometimes a foot or two added to the ordinary width of eight feet. In other localities where the Durham boat was introduced some variations in dimensions were made to suit the local conditions.

The usual depth, from top of gunwale to the twelve-inch keel plank, was forty-two inches, with additional height at the ends of some ten inches, this and other minor features depending upon the fancy of the builder. The draft, light, was from three and a half to five inches, and loaded about twenty-eight inches.

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<sup>31</sup> Navigation on the Upper Delaware--pp.16, 17 and 18.

The boat sixty feet long would carry, down stream, one hundred and fifty barrels of flour or about six hundred bushels of shelled corn. Some of the largest boats built would carry twenty tons, although the load for the ordinary boat was from two to five tons less. The load, up stream, was about two tons.

On the Delaware the crew usually consisted of three men. On some of the more difficult streams more men were needed.

The movement down stream was by floating with the current, with the aid, when necessary, of a pair of eighteen foot oars. Moving up stream the boat was usually propelled by "setting poles," twelve to eighteen feet long and shod with iron. On the thwarts was laid, on each side, a plank twelve inches wide. On these "walking boards" members of the crew, starting at the forward end, with poles on the river bottom and top ends to shoulders, walked to the stern, pushing the boat forward. While they rapidly returned to repeat the process, the captain, who steered, used a pole to hold the boat from going back with the current or, when necessary, pushed it forward by "setting" with a pole, in the short distance which the length of the stern permitted.

For the better footing of the captain in this process, as well as for drainage, the stern deck had a slight incline backward. The forward deck was even with the gunwale and the surface was slightly rounded, so as to shed the water.

The steering oar was thirty-three feet long, with a blade twelve inches in width. It is possible that the shape of the oar may have been slightly varied, according to the necessities of the builders.

A "keel plank," twelve inches wide, was a part of the hull, there being no keel. The boat, as a rule was painted black and was without special name.

A movable mast, six inches in diameter and thirty-three feet long, with a boom of the same length and a three-cornered sail, enabled the boat to sail up stream when the wind favored. Being without keel or centre board, it could only sail with the wind astern, but, with a favorable wind, the progress was very rapid.

Sometimes the nature of the banks admitted of drawing the boat along by catching hold of the overhanging bushes, a process known as "pulling brush." In Foul Rift, a particularly difficult rapid, the remains are still seen of iron bolts, in the rocky face on one side of the river, to which rings were attached, by means of which boats were drawn up by boat hook or rope.

In descending some of the rapids the "walking boards" were set up on edge as splash boards, to keep out the water which would dash over the sides. To admit of bailing out any water which might gain access to the hull, bailing places were provided at the ends of the decks. Water falling on the stern deck was carried below by a drain pipe.

The furniture was of the most limited character. A large iron pot, with a side hole near the bottom for draught, served as cook stove, with pieces of flat iron to hold the pan. There was a coffee pot and a water bucket and, for each member of the crew, a tin cup



and plate and a knife and fork and, for all, the unfailing gallon jug of whiskey, from which, an old boatman stated, drinks were taken only at certain places. The men slept on "barn feathers" or straw in the forward cabin, when the weather did not admit of sleeping in the open.

The life of the Durham boatman was very laborious. The descent of many of the rapids was attended with much danger, requiring constant vigilance, and the ascent of the stream was accomplished only by hard work. The crew must always be on the alert and they were subjected to severe exposure.

In the earlier days Well's Falls was passed by a channel between the Pennsylvania shore and the narrow island known as Malta. By this route the rocky channel of the river was avoided. The swiftness of this interior channel was such that it gained the name of Horse Race. The locality still bears the name of Malta although no longer an island, the inside channel having been closed by the encroachment of the Pennsylvania canal, built in 1827.

In the year 1809, the Hon. John Lambert, United States Senator from New Jersey, writes to his wife, living near Lambertville, that the table fare at his Washington boarding house was "pretty fair" but that the table drink was beer, which he did not fancy and, as he did not like spirits, he wished her to send him a barrel of cider, by Pidcock's boat, to the Philadelphia Navy Yard, from which place it would be forwarded. Some further correspondence indicates that the cider went astray. Pidcock's boat was a Durham boat run by one Pidcock, between Coryell's Ferry and Philadelphia.

Another familiar craft seen on the Delaware after the discovery of coal in the Lehigh area around 1814 was the Ark. These were merely rectangular boxes made of heavy planks spiked together. Mr. M. S. Henry, in his History of the Lehigh Valley, published in 1860, gives the following account of these vessels:

"The boats used on this descending navigation consisted of square boxes, or arks, from sixteen to eighteen feet wide and twenty to twenty-five feet long. At first two of these were joined together by hinges, to allow them to bend up and down in passing the dams and sluices, and, as the men became accustomed to the work, and the channels were straightened and improved, the number of sections in each boat was increased, till, at last, their whole length reached one hundred and eighty feet. They were steered with long oars, like a raft.

"Machinery was devised for jointing and putting together the planks of which these boats were made, and the hands became so expert that five men could put one of the sections together and launch it in forty-five minutes. Boats of this description were used on the Lehigh until the end of the year 1831, when the Delaware Division of the Pennsylvania canal was partly finished.

"The lumber of the ark was sold at destination, the ironwork being carted back for further use."

People now began moving inland, and turned their attention to the construction of canals which had been so successful in the old country. As early as 1804 there had been much talk of constructing a canal across New Jersey to connect the Delaware and Raritan Rivers. This dream was interrupted by the War of 1812, but once peace was established the vast up-swing in business again demanded better transportation. Finally, on February 4, 1830, the New Jersey Legislature granted a private company a charter to proceed with the Delaware and Raritan Canal. Oddly enough on the very same day the Legislature also granted a railroad company a charter to build a railroad paralleling the canal from Trenton to Lambertville. Thus the death warrant of the canal was virtually signed the same day it was born. However, it was not until sixteen years after the canal was completed that the railroad came through. This canal was to be forty-three miles long from Trenton to the Raritan River in New Brunswick. It was to be supplied with water by a feeder twenty-two and one half miles long from the intake just above Bull's Island, near Raven Rock, New Jersey, to the main canal at Trenton. Boats up to a draft of seven feet were to be allowed in the main canal, and up to a draft of five feet in the feeder.

The company, in looking around for engineers to construct this waterway, finally chose two men who were later to become eminent in their field, Canvass White and Ashbel Welsh. Canvass White had already become celebrated as a builder of canals because of his work on the Erie. From that job he brought along an assistant, Ashbel Welsh, who was then but twenty-one years of age. Welsh was placed in charge of building the feeder, and in 1832 became a resident of Lambertville, where he lived until his death in 1882. Probably no other citizen of Lambertville has ever been more responsible for its growth and well-being than Mr. Welsh, since he took a personal and active interest in every phase of community life. In addition to his canal construction he was practically the father of New Jersey railroads, achieving national honors in developing a new type of rail, and also the block safety system of railroad signals.

In constructing the feeder he employed four thousand men using pick and shovel. Most of these men were Irish immigrants who were brought over from Cork by the boat load, with little in their possession but the clothes upon their back. Lambertville, being the half-way point, attracted them and they congregated in the southern section of town where they threw up shacks in which to live. This congestion, along with the fact that their pay was but seventy-five cents per day (sun up to sundown), led to conditions which bred riots, and the spread of disease. In 1832 Asiatic cholera broke out among them and spread through the entire town. Mr. Welsh at once established the first Board of Health; commandeered the half finished Lilly Hill House<sup>32</sup> as a hospital; and supervised the burying of the dead practically where they dropped, i.e., in Burrough's Woods

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<sup>32</sup>Dr. Dantzig's residence on the highway.



between Somerset and Washington Crossing, on the Wolverton farm at Prallsville, on Bull's Island, and on the Lilly farm just out of town on the Rocktown Road. Records state the workmen died like flies.

Finally, despite the cholera and a particularly severe shovel riot between two factions of Irish workmen at Bull's Island, necessitating the calling out of the Lambertville Military Company, the feeder canal was finished on June 25, 1834. To celebrate the event Governor Peter Vroom and top company officials boarded a barge at Trenton, borrowed from the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal, and were towed up to Lambertville for a gigantic celebration and banquet. The day's events are described in a letter by Engineer Welsh. Said the letter in part:

On Wednesday the directors and some thirty or more of the principal stockholders, together with the Governor and sundry others of our great people, came up the feeder as far as Lambertville in a Chesapeake and Delaware canal barge. After dining there, all hands got aboard the barge and started for Trenton about nine o'clock at night. By good luck more than good management, we got to Trenton without wrecking the boat, and after a short nap started off yesterday morning for New Brunswick.

The canal banks for the whole distance were lined with people--that is to say, there were large collections of them at the landings, bridges, etc. A more jolly party than ours was in the afternoon you seldom meet. John C. Stevens, James S. Green and Thomas Biddle acted as fun makers and they acquitted themselves admirably. When we arrived at New Brunswick we were greeted with a salute of twenty-four guns, were received by the military with presented arms, stood something less than half an hour with our hats off while the mayor made a speech and was answered, hurraed in return to their civilities until we were all hoarse, were marched up and down the streets and a little after dark sat down to a sumptuous dinner provided at the expense of the canal company. The military, for their arduous services (to wit, waiting under arms four or five hours and being nearly broiled) received their pay partly in champagne and partly in glory.

Financially the canal was a greater success than anticipated, showing a gross profit in 1870-71 alone of \$1,035,360 and a net of \$732,352. Much traffic came over from the Pennsylvania canal, the boats loaded with Lehigh coal being ferried across the river here from a lock at the lower end of New Hope. The ruins of these old locks, directly opposite each other, can still be seen on both sides of the river. Although one half of the cargo was coal, local business was stimulated by the shipping of lumber, grain, flour, iron, and the famous Belgian blocks cut on Goat Hill, which were used for paving in New York and Philadelphia.

Although business declined steadily after 1900 the writer can still remember, as a boy in 1917, hearing the boatman sound his



warning upon approaching a bridge or lock for the tender to be ready to pass him through. This he would do by blowing on a tin horn, or more often upon a large seashell, which had a very mournful note. The gang of boys would rush to the towpath to see the three mules, the lead mule with a bell around its neck and his ears through an old straw hat, towing the sluggish barges along. The mule driver's language was always very choice as I recall, casting reflections on the mule's parentage. Often the bargeman's wife would be hanging out the wash on deck, while her husband skillfully manned the tiller. These people very often had no other home but the cabin on the stern of the barge. Life was easy, life was slow on the canal, but vast quantities of material were moved very cheaply.

It seems as though the canal was no sooner finished when on January 8, 1841 it became somewhat of a liability rather than an asset to the town. On this day, due to heavy rains up state, the river rose to an all time high. The canal kept pace and in overflowing its banks put much of the village under water. Center Bridge finally gave way. Charging down stream like a locomotive with open throttle, it struck the Lambertville-New Hope bridge with such force that three spans were thrown into the torrent. A letter in the Hunterdon Gazette at that time states that "The citizens were preparing to leave their houses, when the large waste-weir, opposite Holcombe's basin--about half a mile above the village--by the force of the water, gave way; which seemed providential--else the consequence might have been serious indeed, if the canal had given way in the town." In all, five bridges between Easton and Trenton were swept away, thereby severing New Jersey from Pennsylvania.

Apparently Lambertville had now assumed large enough proportions to be designated a town, so that on March 1, 1849 the Legislature of New Jersey chartered it as such. The act describes that portion of West Amwell township to be set off as Lambertville in the following manner: "Beginning at low water mark in the river Delaware, at the corner of the Prime Hope Mill tract, being the corner between said tract and land of John Coryell;" thence (so many chains, etc.) in an easterly direction to a corner; and thence north "to a corner of John Holcombe's lot; thence north twenty-two and a half degrees west, in a straight line to the middle of the Alexsockin Creek; thence, down the same, to the Delaware River; thence, down the same (including Holcombe's Island) to the place of beginning, shall be, and hereby is erected into a borough or town corporate, which shall be called and known by the name of 'The Town of Lambertville.'" A mayor and three common councilmen were provided for to govern the new town. Records show that Samuel Lilly, M.D. was the first mayor.

The industries flourishing at the time may be gathered from the old map of 1851, i.e., Carriage making; Flax and flour mills; Flax factory; Brewery; Marble yards; Hat factory; Foundry making axles, boilers, and steam engines; and Saw mills. In this connection it might be noted that this entire area was noted for its lumbering since colonial times. As the forests became cut off in the immediate

vicinity, large quantities of lumber were rafted down the river from the Lehigh and upper Delaware, to be sawed at Lambertville and places below.

In his History of Bucks County Gen. W. W. H. Davis records that the first raft to navigate the Delaware started from Cochection, some forty miles or more above Port Jervis, in 1746, under the management of one, Skinner, aided by a man named Parks. The hazardous run of nearly two hundred miles brought the adventurers to Philadelphia. Here, we are told, the two men were given the freedom of the city, of which they doubtless made good use, and that Skinner was created (by what authority it is not stated) "Lord High Admiral of the Delaware," a title which he is said to have borne until his death in 1813.

Davis further states that this raft consisted of six pine trees, or logs, seventy feet in length, to be used as masts of ships then building in Philadelphia. Holes were made through the ends of the logs and all were strung together on poles, called spindles, with a pin at each end to keep the logs from spreading apart. This proved to be the beginning of an enormous business, to supply an ever-increasing demand.

Rafting on the Delaware was at its height in 1840 to 1845 and then it began to decrease in 1855. The season was generally about four weeks long, during the spring freshets. For the first two weeks nearly all the rafts were of sawed lumber, and during the last two weeks they were mostly of logs.

The life of the raftsman was one of hard work and exposure, and required hardy men. As a rule, the raft carried no shelter from sun and storm. These raftsmen often tied up at Lambertville overnight and quartered at the Red Tavern. This ordinary was south of the town and I believe was located along the river opposite the Fireman farm.

Certain men living at Lambertville made a business of piloting rafts through Wells' Falls, which was an extremely difficult job. Five dollars was the usual fee for this service.

This rafting continued up to the early part of the century as Mr. William Lewis remembers seeing the last raft go down. He recalls being on the Pennsylvania side just above the Union Mills when the raft, with two lumbermen aboard, came drifting by. The men were lying about, taking little notice of their approach to the falls. Mr. Lewis, knowing the river like a book, hailed them with the advice that they were approaching the "shoot" in the falls at a bad angle and had better awake to their duties. One man inquired of Mr. Lewis as to "how he would like to go to hell." Mr. Lewis replied that he "would not be interested, but knew the two were on their way to that destination." Three minutes later the men realized they were in trouble and frantically tried to work the raft by means of the big tiller. It was too late. The raft went over the falls, breaking into hundreds of separate logs and throwing the men into the river from which they were pulled out, looking like two half drowned muskrats, further down stream.



Apparently the charter granted to a company to build a railroad in 1830 was allowed to lapse, since we find no activity in this respect until 1836, when a survey was made by Ashbel Welsh, of the proposed route. The New Jersey Legislature issued another charter to an interested group of men in 1836, but due to the financial panic which occurred in 1837, the stock could not be sold. An extension of time was requested and granted by the Legislature.

Early in 1848 a meeting of all interested parties was held in Lambertville. Four reasons for proceeding with the work were advanced. First, the railroad would assist the canal company which could not move material in the freezing weather; secondly, it would benefit the Trenton Iron Company which needed large quantities of iron ore from the mines at Andover; and thirdly, it would bring more business to the Camden and Amboy railroad with which it would connect at Trenton. Another thought advanced was that it could go far enough north to meet the Erie, and thereby divert some of the business from the west flowing into New York.

Mr. Welsh presented his final survey and estimates at this meeting, stating that the route was most favorable for a railroad since the grade was only six percent per mile. Between Trenton and Belvidere, however, there existed five hundred and fifty-six curves which is still somewhat unusual for the mileage covered. In comparison to present day prices his estimates are interesting. The cost of laying the sixty-four pound rails between Trenton and Lambertville was \$80,000; cost of the Lambertville depot or station \$2,000 (the first one was of wood--the present one, built about 1870, of stone); and the cost of a passenger car \$2,200. The present day cost of a passenger car would be closer to \$100,000.

Accordingly the bonds were issued, being guaranteed by the Camden and Amboy railroad, of which the Belvidere-Delaware became a subsidiary. In February, 1851 the way was finally opened to Lambertville. The fare to Trenton at the time was fixed at twenty-five cents, and to Philadelphia at seventy-five cents.

There follows a copy of a notice printed by the Lambertville Beacon in 1851, now in the possession of Mr. Edwin P. Alexander of Yardley, Pennsylvania, who has been of great help in supplying information on this subject.

#### Belvidere-Delaware Railroad

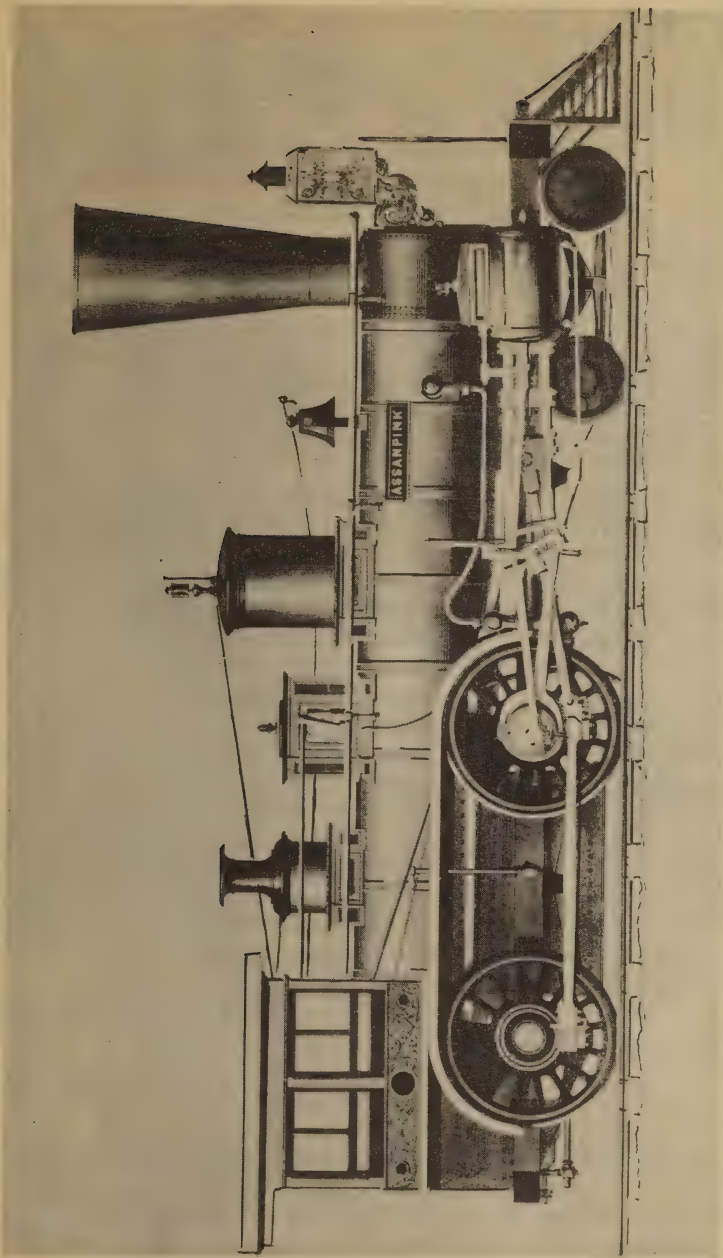
On and after Thursday January 1st the lines on this road will run as follows:

The first line down will leave Lambertville at 15 minutes after 6 o'clock A.M. connecting with the line leaving Trenton at half past 7 o'clock A.M. for Kensington Station, Philadelphia.

The first line up will leave Trenton at 10 minutes past 8 o'clock A.M. on the arrival of the 6 o'clock line from Philadelphia, via Camden and Bordentown.

The second line down will leave Lambertville at half past 11 o'clock A.M. connecting with the line leaving Trenton at 15





Engine built in Trenton, 1860, for the Belvidere Run

minutes before 1 o'clock P.M. for Philadelphia via Bordentown and Camden.

The second line up will leave Trenton at 15 minutes before 5 o'clock, on the arrival of the line from Philadelphia which leaves Kensington Station at 3 o'clock P.M.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Fare between Lambertville & Trenton                                | 25¢ |
| Fare between Lambertville & Philadelphia<br>by either of the lines | 75¢ |

E. Vanuxem, Agent

#### Stages

Easton, Belvidere, Flemington and Doylestown Stages run in connection with the first line up and second line down.

|                            |         |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Fare to Phillipsburg       | \$ 1.00 |
| Lambertville to Flemington | .20     |
| Trenton to Flemington      | .45     |

It is interesting to note that many stage coaches were still in operation as late as 1851.

In the year 1852 the "Major William C. Barnet," a sternwheel steamer, for some time made regular trips between Lambertville and Easton, in connection with the trains. The frequent rocky rapids and the changes in height of water interposed difficulties which led to the exchange of the Barnet for a smaller boat, the "Reindeer," which, however, ran but a short time.

Respecting the Barnet, the following item is taken from J. A. Anderson's Navigation of the Upper Delaware.

"On July 22d, 1851, I started from Vine Street wharf, Philadelphia, on the steamer "Major William C. Barnet," Captain Young (master), for Lambertville. Stuck in Trenton falls and returned to Trenton to wait for higher water. Here the writer left the boat. There was great excitement at Lambertville and New Hope and much disappointment with the assembled crowds, at the non-arrival of the long expected steamer."

On November 17th the Barnet ascended the river as far as Yardleyville and on the 19th as far as Scudder's Falls, where she broke some paddles and returned to Trenton. Her first arrival at Lambertville was on November 24th, about 6 P.M., amid the shouts of the people and the firing of cannon.

On the 26th a trip to Easton was attempted, but, failing to pass Howell's Falls, a short distance above Center Bridge, the boat returned to Lambertville and went into winter quarters.

On March 11th, 1852, the Barnet made an excursion from Lambertville to lower Black's Eddy and return, with one hundred and fifty persons. On the next day the regular trips to Easton began, the run to that point occupying eleven hours. On April 19th the steamer brought from Easton one hundred and twenty persons to take the train at Lambertville for the Kossuth reception at Trenton.

No note is found of the discontinuance of the trips of the Barnet, but there is mention of the first trip of a smaller boat, the "Reindeer," from Lambertville to Easton, on April 28th, 1852. She ran up the canal feeder and entered the river at Bull's Island.

Phillipsburg was reached by the railroad in 1854, and Belvidere in 1855. Somewhat later a branch connected with the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western at Manunka Chunk. The total distance the railroad now covered was sixty-seven miles.

An interesting account of the first train over the system to Phillipsburg is obtained from the American R.R. Journal of Saturday, February 18, 1854--"The first train over the Belvidere Railroad reached Phillipsburg, opposite Easton, Pennsylvania on Friday, February 3rd. About 500 passengers went through from Philadelphia, while at Lambertville, N. J. the train received an accession in the Governor and Legislature of New Jersey." From other sources we learn that the "Trenton Iron Company supplied free champagne for all the official opening ceremonies." One could ride from Trenton to Phillipsburg for \$1.00.

The Flemington Branch, administered by the Belvidere-Delaware, was put through from Lambertville in 1854, and the fare between the two towns was twenty cents--from Trenton to Flemington, forty-five cents.

From a financial standpoint the road was never very profitable. Plenty of iron ore came down, but due to the agricultural nature of the country there was little freight to send out. The benefit of the road to Lambertville was terrific. Ashbel Welsh, who had built the road, acting as its Chief Engineer and later President, saw to it that Lambertville obtained the machine shops. Until 1871, when the Pennsylvania took over the system, not only did these shops repair the rolling stock, but also built new locomotives, as well as passenger and freight cars.

How the railroad naturally stimulated the increase in manufacturing can be seen from examining a map of the town made in the year 1873. A partial list includes:

- (1) C. Arnett--Sash and Blind Factory--also a Saw Mill
- (2) J. Finney--Lumber Yard and Spoke Factory
- (3) Finney and Schlicter--Rope and Twine Factory
- (4) M. Crowin--Saw Mill-Foundry and Machine Shop
- (5) G. Ely--Grist Mill--also a Lumber Yard
- (6) E. Fulmer--Grist Mill
- (7) Amwell Mills-Cotton Thread
- (8) J. Akers--Brewery
- (9) Lambertville Manufacturing Co.--Belting and Packing Rubber
- (10) W. Ramsey--Rag Carpet Factory
- (11) J. Sproat--Flax Factory
- (12) J. Weeden--Paper Manufacturing
- (13) J. Bird--Plaining Mills
- (14) Finney & Schlicter--Linen Factory
- (15) Wm. McCready--Paper Manufacturing
- (16) Wm. Gandy--Paper Manufacturing



Of the above, two or three industries brought national recognition to the town. For a while the Spoke Factory manufactured only spokes, but later turned out the finished wheel. Their capacity for one day was enough wheels to supply one hundred wagons. During the Civil War most of the wheels which moved the supplies and guns of the Union Army were made in Lambertville.

The Lambertville Manufacturing Company, later known as the Lambertville Rubber Company, extended its line to Rubber Boots, Tennis Shoes and Arctics under the trade name of "Snag Proof." The proprietor of a boot and shoe store in a little Maine fishing village once told the writer (1922) that the only two words of English some of the grand bank fishermen knew were "ice cream" and "Snag Proof Boot." Price for these two articles, with them, was no object.

Each of the above mentioned paper mills specialized in a particular type of manila paper, which at the time was tops in its field. These three were at a later date joined by the Wm. Mann Company, which made paper especially for bank cheques. Their combined capacity was in the neighborhood of twenty-two thousand pounds per day.

Thus the increased ease by which people and materials were moved played a definite part in increasing the population and industrial output of this community. By 1872 the population had reached about five thousand which fact, plus its industrial importance, influenced the Legislature to issue a new charter giving Lambertville the status of a city. This enactment was duly approved by the Governor on March 26, 1872.

## Chapter IX

### LAMBERTVILLE TO THE COLORS

To digress a decade--1861 opened as just another peaceful year in Lambertville, although war clouds were gathering to the south. On January 11th the town was singularly honored by having its native son, the Hon. Samuel Lilly, appointed by President Buchanan as Council General to India, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Dr. Charles Huffnagle, whose home was on the outskirts of New Hope. Without doubt he acquitted himself well in this position. The writer, two years ago, in wandering through the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, discovered a beautiful tray presented to Lilly by the American Merchants of Calcutta, in appreciation of the services he rendered them. This had been in turn presented to the Institute by his grandson, William, of Detroit.

In February a delegation of Lambertville citizens, headed by the editors of the Beacon, journeyed to Trenton to see and hear the new President-elect, Abraham Lincoln. In the next issue of the 22nd, the editors state, "Everyone seemed to be agreeably disappointed in his personal appearance. He is not the ugly looking man his portraits represent him to be although he is not by any means handsome--His voice was musical yet strong and his manner self-possessed and pleasing." Mention is also made that several local gentlemen had their pockets picked in the crowd, for sums ranging from twenty-five to five hundred dollars.

Fort Sumter fell on April 14th. In response to Old Abe's call for three month enlistments, Lambertville went to work recruiting companies. Advertisements in the local papers, by the different companies, stated "no traitors or halfway men wanted." Publishers in Philadelphia apparently did a land office business in selling the "Volunteer's Manual," which guaranteed to make any man a soldier overnight, and the "Campfire Companion" to keep them happy with the latest songs and jokes.

The populace whipped up spirit by having a flag raising about once a week, at which the Lambertville Fencibles appeared with their field piece and fired thirty-four salvoes, along with much oratory. Coryell's Hall (later called Holcombe's Hall, on the southwest corner of York and Main Streets) was the scene of capacity Union meetings, and the new recruits demonstrated their squads right and left on the cricket grounds. Mention is made in the papers that a certain traveling insurance salesman staying in town had been visited by a committee of prominent gentlemen and advised to leave town because of certain remarks he had made favorable to the south.

Finally, on Thursday, April 25th, the first company of eighty-three men left the city under Captain A. W. Angle, having attended

both Presbyterian and Methodist Church services the preceding Sunday, and having been presented with a silk flag on Wednesday, by the Ladies. Ashbel Welsh gave the send off speech and handed each man a Testament. They were so late getting away that they only made Trenton the first night, where they were lodged in the Harmony Engine House and fed at the old Joline Hotel. The second company, The Lambertville Fencibles, of fifty-nine men under Captain S. R. Huselton, departed on April 27th. After marching and counter marching a great deal in Washington and "taking" Arlington from the retreating rebels, they were all back in Lambertville by August. A few had been ill from bad food, but otherwise every man was accounted for.

Bull Run taught everyone that the war was more than a three month proposition, so Captains A. W. Angle and James Bird at once went to work raising companies for three years' service. Their success in this respect allowed the Beacon to state in September that "up to September 1st Lambertville, with a population of but twenty-eight hundred, had sent two companies of three month men and two companies of three year men. Besides, the citizens had raised and were dispensing \$2000 for relief of families suffering from the absence of their menfolk." Lambertville again received recognition from the national government at this time by having Ingham Coryell appointed Assistant Quartermaster of the U. S. Army with the rank of Captain of Artillery assigned to Washington.

By October letters began to arrive from the boys indicating certain needs. As a result, a meeting was called of the town's people on October 7, 1861 in the Presbyterian Church. The purpose was to form a society to "supply clothing and reading material for the soldiers, especially India Rubber blankets." At a subsequent meeting the ladies agreed to meet every Thursday to sew and package articles from nine to five. Letters of appreciation soon began to pour in telling in detail just where these packages were sent and to what troops. After paying glowing tribute to the Ladies for their war work the Beacon mentions the fact that "they can't figure just what the men were doing." Some of them were probably scurrying around collecting \$500 for which, at a later date, it was possible to hire a man to go in their place.

As a result of the bloody fighting for Richmond in May of 1862, the first casualties began to appear in the local papers. At the battle of Williamsburg Capt. Angle's company suffered one killed and his brother, Lt. C. A. Angle, and Sgt. C. Westley Arnett badly wounded. In Capt. Bird's company three killed and Capt. Bird wounded. A few days later, at Fair Oaks, Capt. Angle<sup>33</sup> was wounded along with fifteen others in his company, and two killed.

In the same engagement, with Capt. Bird<sup>34</sup> away recovering, his company suffered three badly wounded. With medical attention as it was in those days a badly wounded case was as good as dead already.

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<sup>33</sup>Co. A 5th New Jersey Reg.

<sup>34</sup>Co. H 6th New Jersey Reg.



Despite these losses and the general disheartening news from the front, the men of Lambertville still continued to form companies. The following are listed as training in town in the spring of 1862. Lambertville Fencibles of sixty men under Capt. S. R. Huselton; Anderson's Guards of fifty men under Capt. H. Hughes; Lambertville Cadets of seventy-five to eighty men under Capt. A. Kohl and Lambertville Zouaves of forty men under Capt. S. Green. In addition to this there were over one hundred men at the seat of war.

Apparently these home guard companies would on occasion go up to Stockton to stage sham battles. A witness to one of these battles writes in the Beacon of June 20, 1862, "at a military review and sham battle in Stockton one man was wounded in the neck by a bayonet, two men struck in the head with blank cartridges, and fifty-two shot in the neck with 'wiskey.' Capt. Case's horse was wounded in the nose with a bayonet while making a gallant charge."

The war now began to make itself felt to the man in the street. Articles became hard to procure and prices went up. Coal became so scarce that the Belvidere-Delaware Railroad advertised for farmers to deliver oak wood along the track, for which \$2.75 per cord was paid. Shin plasters made their appearance in place of small coins and paper of all types went sky high.

The War Department in September of '62 instituted the draft for the first time in history. Lambertville was exempt in the first draft as it was the only town, or township, in Hunterdon County which had already sent more than enough men to cover her quota. The town, however, offered bounties of fifty dollars to any man who would enlist, since a survey showed there were four hundred sixteen able-bodied men available between the ages of eighteen and forty-five.

The lowest ebb in the spirits of the citizens of Lambertville appears after the loss of the Battle of Chancellorsville in May of 1863. The town suffered three killed and twenty-four wounded, including Maj. A. W. Angle. One hundred citizens of New Hope even went so far as to petition the Pennsylvania Legislature to sue for peace. However, a quick come-back was made in June when the Governor of Pennsylvania sent an appeal to New Jersey for men to protect Harrisburg from Lee's advance into the north. A special company of sixty-five Lambertville men under Capt. Hiram Hughes, proceeded to Harrisburg and were assigned to guard a bridge at Duncannon, Pennsylvania, during the battle of Gettysburg. On the other hand, the town was now having difficulty in meeting its draft quota despite the fact that the Common Council borrowed money in order to pay volunteers a four hundred dollar bounty. This condition led the editor of the Beacon to remark that "a mustard drought can't begin to equal Uncle Sam's draft in drawing out diseases."

It might be mentioned at this point that, although the Ladies were constantly holding affairs at Holcombe Hall to raise money (three hundred dollars in a few days) for relief of the soldiers, there was still money enough around to allow a group of energetic citizens to raise sixteen hundred dollars and buy ground (which had acted

as a road block) from William Brewer and thus extend Union Street north of Delevan.

Finally, after four long years, on April 3, 1865, news reached Lambertville, by the up train at 12:30, that Richmond had been captured. All stores were closed and a parade organized by Cornelius Arnett, the line up being--

Carpenters Cornet Band

"Union" Cannon, drawn by boys

Eagle Fire Co. of New Hope

Aquatong Fire Co. of Lambertville, N. J.

Union Fire Co. of Lambertville

Fleet Wing Fire Co. of Lambertville

Citizens

This atmosphere of rejoicing continued until the end of the month when the town was thrown into a state of gloom by the news of President Lincoln's death. The day of the funeral a huge memorial meeting was held at Holcombe Hall with over fifteen hundred in attendance. The speakers stood near the open windows so the crowds in the street could hear their remarks. Thus Lambertville went through in the Civil War all the emotions and trials that it was again to experience, years later, in 1917 and 1941.

## Chapter X

### PEACE, PROSPERITY AND EXPANSION

After the town became a city in 1872 all industries expanded and prospered. Despite the discontinuing of the manufacture of new engines and cars in the railroad shops, large numbers of men were still employed to maintain and repair the rolling stock. At the turn of the century a survey was made of all businesses in town, which was tabulated as follows--Barber shops 10; Grocery stores 25; Dry goods stores 10; Gentlemen's furnishings 6; Shoe stores 6; Candy stores 3; Bakeries 2; Drug stores 3; Cigar stores 7; Restaurants 7; Hotels and Saloons 12; Millinery stores 5; Butchers 12; Stationery stores 5; Hardware stores 3; Stove stores 2; Plumbing establishments 5; Pool rooms 1; Library 1; Banks 2; Jewelry stores 2; Flower mills 2; Photographers 2; Coal dealers 6; Undertakers 4; Physicians 5; Dentists 3; Lawyers 6; Rubber mills 2; Spoke mills 1; Foundry and Machine shops 3; Paper mills 3; Liveryes 4; Newspapers 3. These establishments served a population of exactly 4,637.

Of the five physicians, Dr. George H. Larison, with a large general practice, served his city and state well. Besides being a member of the City Council he acted as Superintendent of the City Schools, President of the State Medical Society, Brigadier General in the Medical Corps of the State Militia, and on Sundays preached as an ordained Baptist Minister to a congregation in Solebury. In addition to all these duties he was very active in the Hunterdon County Historical Society. One of his interesting investigations is recounted in the local papers of this time. It had been told by old residents of the area that in 1777, about the time the British lay at Princeton and Trenton, the Tories had informed their friends that a concentration of guns and ammunition was being gathered at Hunterdon Court House (later Flemington). Lt. Geary was sent by the Redcoats, with a number of mounted men, to destroy this arsenal. This task he accomplished, and upon returning to camp was met between Mt. Airy and Copper Hill by a group of citizen soldiers. Fire was opened upon the group and Lt. Geary fell, shot through the head. He was buried on the spot, in a near by field. To substantiate this story the Historical Society appointed Dr. Larison the head of a committee to exhume the remains. May 18th, in 1891, at 10:00 A.M. was fixed as the time to open the grave and note the contents. Upon digging down about two and a half feet the remains were found, along with the silver buttons from his vest bearing the figures 16 and Q. D. (the 16th Regiment of the Queens Dragoons). As no ball was found in the skull they concluded it must have passed entirely through. No other parts of his uniform were discovered, as tradition had been correct in stating that his red coat, cap, sword and



epaulettes "were divided among his victors." A wooden sign on the highway still points to the grave in the field.

In 1870 a monument to commemorate the boys of '65 who had given their lives had been erected in Mt. Hope Cemetery. This was a marble shaft surmounted by a large bronze spread eagle. In 1900 the G. A. R. post decided it should be brought down into town and placed at the intersection of Bridge and Franklin Streets. This location not meeting with general approval, the monument was re-erected on the present city lot on York Street. The eagle was removed and presented to the High School where it can still be seen, and the cast iron fence which surrounded the plot was transferred to the First Ward School. It was at this time that the figure of the Union soldier was purchased to replace that of the Eagle on top of the shaft. October 4, 1900 was designated Monument Day. Governor Voorhees was in attendance to speak and witness a gigantic parade of three divisions, extending over a mile. Fire Chief George Arnett was Chief Marshal and did himself proud.

In connection with Mr. George Arnett it may be said that, between 1870 and 1920, he and his father, Cornelius, built two thirds of Lambertville. Over 2000 homes and places of business were erected by their own private capital and labor. Their faith and confidence in the community could well be emulated by the citizens of today. Having this interest in the physical and economic aspect of the city, Mr. Arnett was for years Chief of the Fire Department. Through his untiring efforts the four companies were brought to a high state of efficiency, both in apparatus and performance. Today this enthusiasm on the part of the volunteer members has been maintained, so that no community of like size can boast of a better fire protection department.

It was in this era (around 1890) that the New Jersey Rubber Company purchased the buildings formerly used as machine shops by Mr. William Cowin. This company engaged in the reclaiming of rubber from old boots, shoes, tires, etc. Their product was sold to manufacturers at a much lower cost than new rubber, and was particularly suitable in making insulation for electric wires. Working at times with a night and day shift, two hundred men would turn out as much as thirty-two hundred pounds per day of the finished product, often termed shoddy.

Another industry to have its birth in Lambertville about 1901 was the Hairpin Factory. Founded by William Smith, who had been a pioneer in the industry, and later his son, Archibald, they turned out fifteen tons of hairpins each week to enable the ladies to keep their "crowning glory" in place. These pins ranged in length from small ones of an inch or less in length to the large four inch type. Since machines did most of the work only one hundred fifteen men were required to turn out the finished product. It may be said that clever and attractive packaging was one of the secrets of huge sales. Boys of the writer's generation can well remember visiting the dump pile of this factory in order to obtain ammunition for sling shots.

Why more eyes were not put out with these dangerous playthings is a mystery.

At this point Lambertville suffered sudden and severe damage. It started to rain on Thursday morning, October 7, 1903. It continued through the night, Friday, and Friday night. When the citizens awoke on Saturday morning their cellars, and even the first floors, were already covered to the depth of a foot with river water. As a matter of fact the height of the flood was not reached until Sunday morning, the 10th, when the all time record of 24.88 feet over normal was reached. This compared with the record of 20 feet attained by the great flood of January 8, 1841.

My father, the late Dr. J. Gibson Petrie, often gave me an eye witness account of the covered bridge going out on Saturday night. He, with hundreds of others, had viewed it from the top of boxcars back of the station. At 5 o'clock, when he had walked over the bridge from his office in New Hope, the water was lapping the floor boards. At exactly 11:00 P.M. the first span slid gracefully off with little noise and with the kerosene oil lamps still burning. The second span went off one half hour later, and the third around 2:00 A.M. All that remained was about half a span on the New Jersey side of the river. Thus passed away the picturesque covered bridge, for when it was rebuilt in 1904 a structure of steel was substituted. The total damage to Lambertville, including the bridge loss, was around \$165,000.

The year 1909 saw the beginning of the Lambertville Pottery Company for the manufacture of toilets. Andrew Foltz, Philip J. Faherty, and George E. Back, from a modest start of a \$10,000 plant of two kilns, increased the facilities to twelve kilns by 1922. It was at this time the company acquired the buildings of the Hair-pin Factory. At the peak of production three hundred tanks and bowls were being turned out each day, with a yearly sales gross of \$1,250,000. This nationally known business, through careful management, was able to employ three hundred eighty-five men, paying some potters as much as eighty dollars per week. Its stock holders, mostly local people, never missed a six percent dividend. Lambertville was definitely on the upward beat, economically!



## Chapter XI

### THEN CAME THE WAR

From the standpoint of a boy of seven it was most thrilling. My first recollections are of the huge troop trains coming down the Bel-Del Division, en route to New York for embarkation, and stopping on the siding across the canal. We would call across to the boys asking them where they were from and to what outfit they belonged. I especially remember the famous Rainbow Division which was so pepped up they assured us they would win the war in a week, once they arrived in France.

The citizens again showed the same patriotic fervor as in '61-'65. Gigantic meetings were held in the Strand Theatre and on the corner of Bridge and Union Streets, to push the sale of War Saving Stamps and Bonds. These meetings were frequently presided over by the late Thomas Walker who recited the poem "In Flanders Field the Poppies Grow" so often and so well that I thought he wrote it himself. Large choruses, under the leadership of Mary G. Brown, would lead the singing and everyone would join in with "Over There," "My Buddy," and "Pack Up Your Troubles." The amazing thing is that the city never fell down on its quotas. Under the direction of the Reverend Theron Lee \$222,900 was realized on the 3rd Liberty Loan, and \$445,800 on the 4th. The 5th, or Victory Loan, went well over \$500,000. The main speakers at these affairs were often wounded Canadian officers who were sent down to the States to recount their war experiences. Also, in connection with the 4th Loan Drive, a large train loaded with war relics pulled into the station for a few hours. Five thousand people viewed this display of captured German armament.

Hate for everything German mounted with each dispatch from the front. The local school board dispensed with the German language; the Beacon announcing in large headlines "The language of the Brute is abandoned for French." Since the Kaiser had announced that he had millions of Germans in sympathy with him in the United States, a local attorney advertised in the papers that he was accepting affidavits by citizens of German descent that they were loyal to the U. S. Government.

This being an "all out war" and the "war to end wars," not only did the men of the community work to build up the War Chest, the ladies labor long hours making hospital supplies, but the children also were enlisted to sell savings stamps and gather fruit pits. Well can the writer recall going from door to door asking for dried peach pits and carting them in an express wagon to the central depot. These were used by the government to make carbon which was placed in the gas masks.



The Home Guards, under Captain Harold Wilbur, was formed of men over thirty-five. They were equipped with campaign hats and army rifles. Again Holcombe Hall vibrated to the tramp of marching feet. When a certain amount of proficiency was reached they gave a demonstration and review on the ball grounds, at which time Captain Arthur Foran presented commissions and the colors. One of the stunts put on resulted in a near catastrophe in the Petrie family. One man would grasp the muzzle of a rifle, and one the butt. They would then run down a column of men at break neck speed with the rifle held at knee height. The trick was for the soldier to jump over it when his turn came. Father jumped too late and was wacked in the shins with such force that he fell forward on his face. Needless to say he was rendered hors de combat for several days, but had offered the spectators no end of amusement, and the citizens felt assured that they were well protected.

For the first time in American history some definite program was established to conserve food and ration the same. Charles M. Dilts was appointed local food administrator, becoming as popular as rain at a Sunday School picnic. Fines or imprisonment were threatened for hoarding, and people were limited to three pounds of sugar per month. Potato bread was advised as a substitute for that made of grain flour. While for the most part the citizens of Lambertville cooperated, I, as a gatherer of peach pits from cellar floors, was able to detect certain stock piles that did not signify whole hearted agreement with the order.

Unlike the Civil War there was little oratory or fanfare when the boys would leave town for their basic training at Fort Dix. On an average, eight to ten men were called each month. Accompanied by a few friends and relatives, they were quietly seen off from the station. In all, Lambertville sent two hundred twenty-five men, of which several gave their lives to preserve democracy. Some of these never survived the epidemic of influenza which swept through Fort Dix and the United States as a whole. As a matter of fact, five percent of the people of Lambertville were affected with the disease, and entire families were wiped out in the course of a few weeks. To the credit of the medical corps of the army only one man died of disease to ten killed, which entirely reversed the ratio experienced in the Union Army in the war between the States.

Well can I recall the wild rejoicing of the people of Lambertville when the news came on November 11, 1918 that an armistice had been declared. To a boy of eight, Bridge and Union Streets contained the largest crowds I had ever witnessed. With the factory whistle cords tied down and the church bells ringing, the noise was deafening. All this, despite the fact that a few days before people had gone through the same procedure over a false report that the war had come to an end. The local band was kept parading for hours. Everything was quite orderly, however, since in June of that year the city had voted itself "dry" by a close margin. The general opinion was that with the boys home life would resume a normal aspect of growth, both physically and economically.

## Chapter XII

### CAUSE AND EFFECT

Throughout New Jersey Lambertville had come to be known because of its many and diversified industries, as the biggest little town in the state. With the arrival of the twenties events caused a decided change in the economic picture.

As early as 1909 the last of the mechanics and office force of the railroad shops had been moved to Trenton. This policy on the part of the Pennsylvania Railroad was entirely understandable, since the Belvidere Division was now only a part of the vast system, and the Trenton Shops were more centrally located. It did, however, deprive the city of a large revenue and several citizens who moved in order to be closer to their work.

With the advent of World War I, the government required many of the industries to cut their production about fifty percent. There was little or no conversion to the manufacture of war materials, so the pinch was definitely felt. Some come back was made when these restrictions were removed following the close of the war, but other events were to offset this temporary recovery.

The paper mills were to go first, since they were geared to produce but one type of office paper. It was a rather thin, transparent sheet which was popular for a number of years but then was replaced by a heavier stock. The new demands could not be met.

With the "roaring twenties" came bobbed hair. No longer were hairpins necessary to keep three feet of hair in place. The hairpin factory decided to curtail its overhead and centralize its production in its sister plant at Buffalo, New York. The buildings of this company were sold in 1922 to the Lambertville Pottery Company, which was just adjacent.

The year 1925 actually saw the seeds of the 1930 depression planted. It was the year of the great mergers in all businesses. Many of the nationally known pottery companies saw an opportunity to furnish contractors with not only porcelain ware, but also the fittings--in other words a complete bathroom produced by one company. Naturally the Lambertville Pottery, making toilets only, could not compete in the open market with these big combinations. Where there were thirty-five potters in the United States before 1925, there are but eleven today. Fortunately for the company, but unfortunately for Lambertville, the pottery liquidated at the right time.

Now came the greatest blow of all. The Lambertville Rubber Company, which had always produced a quality product, decided to go on a production basis, and with the assistance of several imported efficiency experts, endeavored to turn out an article which could compete with U. S. Rubber. They failed in their attempt,

and when the doors closed around three hundred workers were deprived of a livelihood.

As an anticlimax, Mr. Firestone's large rubber plantation in Africa finally came into production. The price of crude rubber fell rapidly as this was dumped on the market. No longer could reclaimed rubber be sold at a margin of profit to keep the cylinders rolling at the New Jersey Rubber Company. While the number of men involved was not large, it added to the unemployment problem.

While the causes mentioned were probably supplemented by personal problems on the part of the management, it is also recognized that money to carry them through, at the time was definitely hard to obtain. Bankers, being able to take assets to New York to be used as "call money" at an interest rate of seventeen percent, were naturally reluctant to loan it out to a business for only six percent.

It would seem as though the citizens of Lambertville were so weighed down by this series of losses that they would have given up. Just the opposite occurred. Within a period of ten years other industries had taken up production in the remodeled old plants. Nearly all of these were established with Lambertville capital. Not only were these new industries to be completely different from the old, but they were to produce a greater volume of articles, i.e. Flatware, Hosiery, Lace, Luggage, Women's and Children's Garments, Pocketbooks, Novelties, Ceramics, and Bottled Gas.

Whatever Lambertville has gained or lost in its better than two hundred years of existence, it will always continue to enjoy a favorable geographic position halfway between two of the country's greatest cities, Philadelphia and New York. In the final analysis, it is not its historic past alone that makes the town important and delightful, but also the beauty of its setting in the Delaware Valley, and the friendliness and vision of its citizens.



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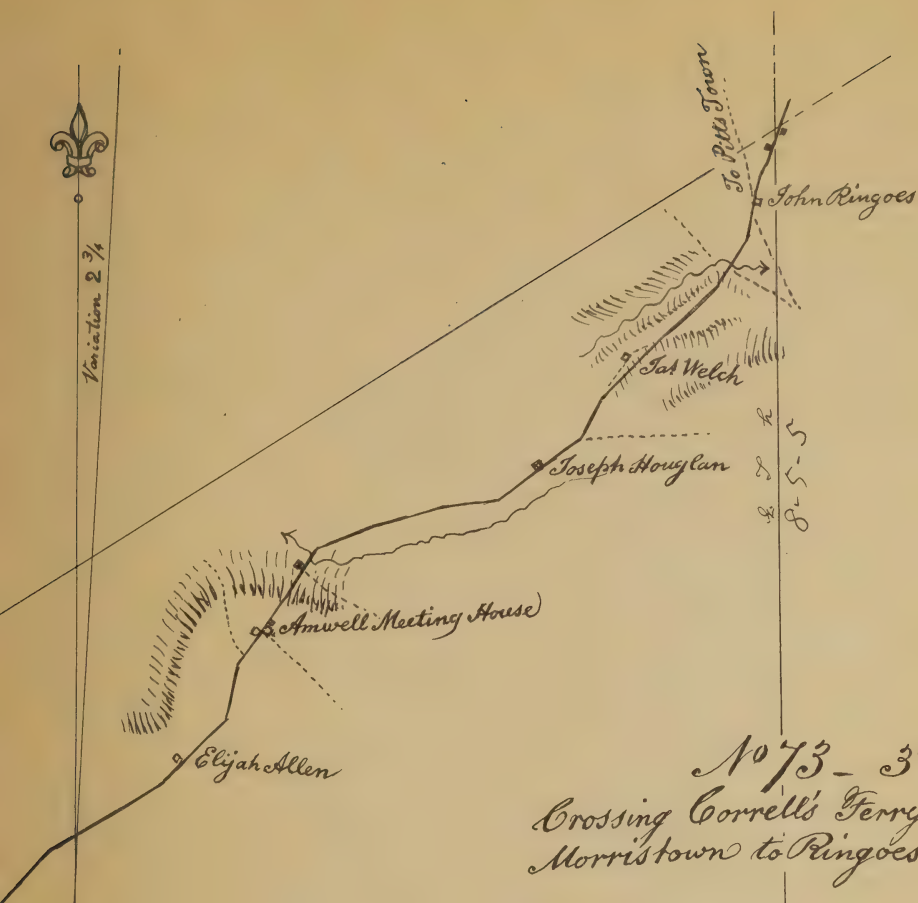








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